



HIT LIST

volume three/number three

november/december 2001

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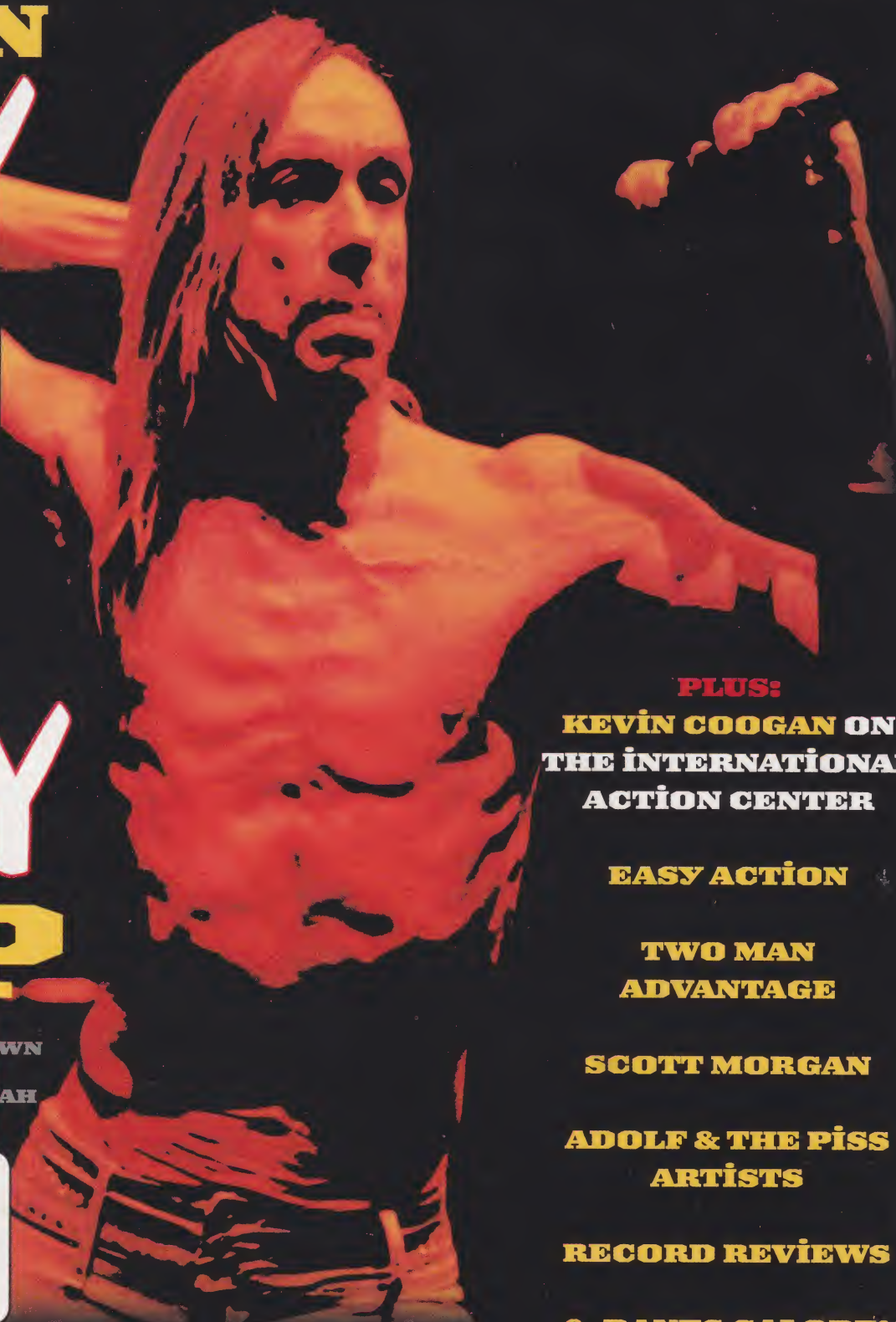
GREEN DAY



**BILLIE JOE TALKS TO
LARRY LIVERMORE**

IGGY POP

**TIM STEGALL HUNTS DOWN
THE ORIGINAL
STREETWALKIN' CHEETAH**



**PLUS:
KEVIN COOGAN ON
THE INTERNATIONAL
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EASY ACTION

**TWO MAN
ADVANTAGE**

SCOTT MORGAN

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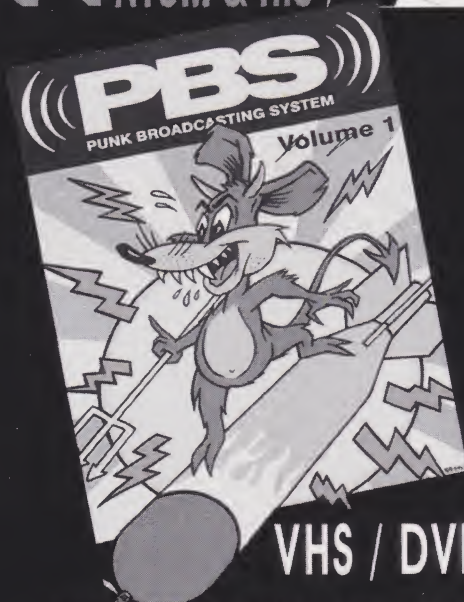
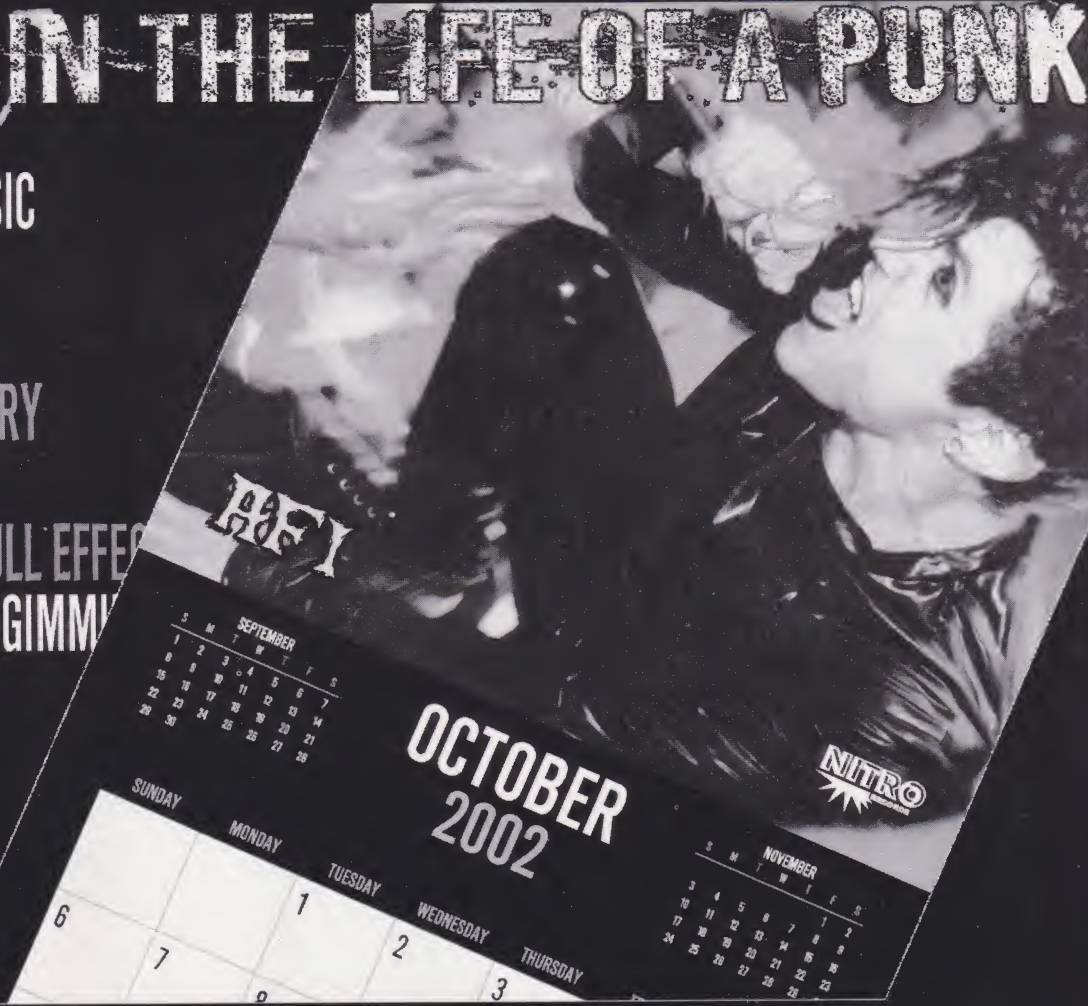
RECORD REVIEWS

& RANTS GALORE!

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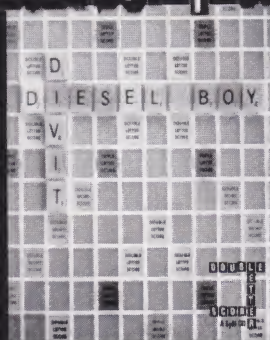


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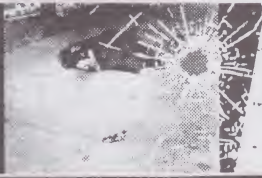
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IGGY POP

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IGGY POP COVER PHOTO & THIS PAGE BY ALEXANDER
M. OSBOURNE/AMO PHOTOGRAPHY

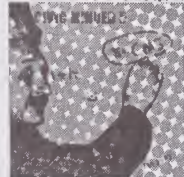
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HIT LIST

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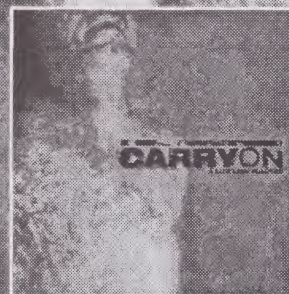
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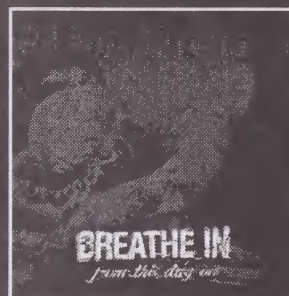
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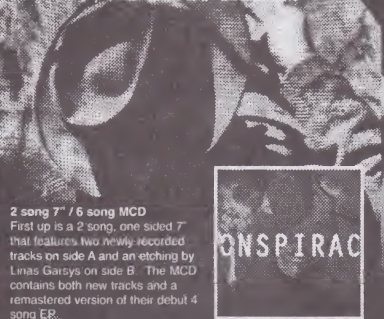
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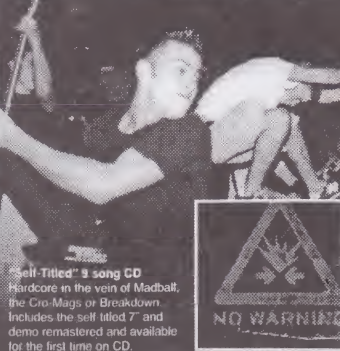
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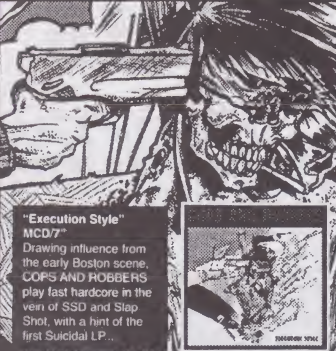
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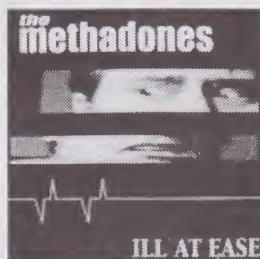


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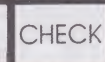
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R E T U R N F I R E

SEPTEMBER 11TH, 2001: ANOTHER DAY
THAT WILL LIVE IN INFAMY

To the Editor and Readers of *Hit List*:

I watched the twin towers burning from a train on the Manhattan Bridge, hundreds of feet above the East River. And again from Union Square at 14th Street, where the image of the towers, flames, and column of smoke took up the entire southern sky. After the buildings had fallen I walked across the city to Houston Street and the West Side Highway on the Hudson River, fifteen blocks from what was the WTC. It seemed that the Earth had cracked open and swallowed the city, and replaced it with a tremendous volcanic crater spewing ash and smoke. As I waited during the day, and later on a train home, and that night with the acrid smell of the smoke and dust drifting through Brooklyn, I had a profound and lasting sense of grief.

Amid the absolute devastation, another emotion crept through me that day less noble, a feeling of doubt. That the life I live, the music I am involved with, and the musicians and labels I share my studio with might be trivial. I knew that feeling was wrong, and fought it all day. A guitarist I know offered that the important thing was that we live and work in a place where you CAN create music, and that is not trivial. I thought of the thousands of people who have told me in person how much music meant to them. I thought that music and all the arts inspire people to be creative, to have compassion, to be self-expressive, and to show love. Then I thought that music and the arts are the opposite and antithesis of the terror at the WTC. And the doubt disappeared.

Don Fury
Cyclone Sound
NYHC
Loud Fast Rules

Dear Don:

I have nothing to add to your eloquent remarks. Thanks for expressing your feelings about this tragic event.

Jeff Bale

Hello Everyone:

On Tuesday, Sept 11, 2001, our amigo JOHNNY HEFFE of NYC band the BULLYS, who are on the AMP Records label, was listed as missing in action at the WTC. Johnny was a member of one of NYC's elite Fire Fighters units, every member of which has been listed as missing. They were the first ones on the scene and into the towers.

To date he has not been found. I'd like everyone to stop and take a moment to remember NYC's toughest rawker. If anyone could have survived, it would have been Johnny, who was one tough son of a bitch.

Thanx,

Larry Retard
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PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON JOHNNY HEFFE

The first night I met Johnny Hefte we were both out at the Continental in NYC, so all of the details from that night are kind of hazy. I don't remember what band was playing or what night of the week it was, but I do remember this tough-looking, leather jacket-wearing, pumped-up motherfucker rolling up and handing me a Bullys CD. We got to talking about music, of course. I had heard great things about his band the Bullys, and he had seen the Toilet Boys a couple of times. He recognized our infatuation with fire in our live show, and stated (in the coolest New York accent you can imagine) "I'm a New York City fireman - youzz need a guy like me!" HIS WORDS WERE SO TRUE IN SO MANY WAYS.

1) We needed a guy like Johnny as a band!

Soon after that night at the Continental the Toilet Boys were offered the coolest gig - opening for Blondie at Madison Square Garden! Johnny was the first person I thought of to help us get through the stress of pulling off our show at a place like the Garden. I barely even knew the guy, but there was something about him that made me feel secure, and

over time the Toilet Boys came to depend on Johnny having our backs. I'm so thankful to have had such a dependable, courageous, and charming human being as part of our Toilet Boy family. Johnny's support and passion kept us going in so many situations - whether it was driving us to gigs, changing guitar strings, or kicking in people's heads (when they deserved it), Johnny gave us everything he had, and we will always be grateful.

2) We needed a guy like Johnny as rock fans...

Once I got to see the Bullys, I truly fell in love. They were the kind of band that made me want to move to NYC in the first place. It's hard to put into words, just as most incredibly moving experiences are, but the Bullys did to me what (I imagine) the Dead Boys and the Ramones did to all those lucky fucks that saw them at CBGB's in the late 70s. Their live shows personified their name and they bullied my ass into a punk rock'n'roll frenzy more times than I can remember. Johnny's passion for his songs would explode through jumps, kicks, and screams, and his stage presence was strangely menacing and inviting all at the same time. The Bullys are/were the toughest band in NYC - and the world - in every sense of the word "tough", and Johnny has given a whole new meaning to the words "GUITAR HERO". Anybody who hasn't heard them should go buy their CDs. If you didn't get to see them live, I'm truly sorry.

3) I needed a guy like Johnny as a friend!

I miss not being able to pick up the phone and hear his Queens accent saying, "What's going on, man?". I miss spending hours talking about bands and gigs and families and our plans for world domination. I miss his passion for Rock 'n' Roll and his sense of community and devotion to the scene. I'll never forget Johnny showing up at various parties in full fireman's gear - still on duty - but taking a break to support his friends. That was the kind of guy he was. I mean fuck - he was the kind of guy who risked his life to run into burning buildings to save peoples' lives. That fact alone says it all!

The last night I saw Johnny was on Wednesday, September 5th. It was our album release party and he took off from work to come to the show. I had trouble with my amp halfway through the set, and as I was struggling to figure out what the fuck was

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up, there was Johnny, with his Irish face grinning at me. I don't know what we did, but the amp started working again. Once again Johnny had my back. Afterwards, I gave him a hug and said, "I always know it's gonna be alright when I see you smiling at me." We talked for a couple of minutes. He said "See you in Vegas, man". We were leaving for tour on September 12th and Johnny and his wife were planning on coming to see us at the Las Vegas Shakedown on September 28th. We talked about breaking the bank at blackjack, laughed, and said goodbye. On September 11th, Johnny died trying to save peoples' lives at the World Trade Center.

4) WE ALL NEED A GUY LIKE JOHNNY, and I'm truly gonna miss him.

Sean
The Toilet Boys.

Dear Larry and Sean:

Needless to say, we are very sorry to hear of Johnny Heffe's death, all the more since we recently published an interview with the BULLYS in Hit List (#14).

Jeff Bale

TO EMO OR NOT TO EMO, THAT IS THE UTTERLY TRIVIAL QUESTION

Dear Hit List:

My respect for the great Jeff Bale faded faster than a pot-smoker at a Minor Threat show, and was replaced with disbelief and contempt. He has demonstrated, beyond a shadow of a doubt, his lack of knowledge and blatant close-mindedness in one of his recent columns: "The End of the Ramones...and Much Else Besides."

I'm not about to respond to his argument that punk is dead, or at least surviving on life support. I'm writing about his key explanation - and his underlying motivations - for the scarce audiences attending gigs by raw-sounding punk acts like Antiseen. To put all the blame on the Alkaline Trio and No Motiv is not only unfair, it's also ignorant and hypocritical in relation to the rest of the article.

In the very next paragraph, Mr. Bale goes on to say that the lack of unity and the over-diversifying of punk rock musical branches is hurting the true concept of

punk rock. That underground music enthusiasts are fans of just one or a few subgenres, going against the grain of the "accept anyone" conglomeration of original punk rock. But, as Mr. Bale himself said, "I never, ever attend hardcore or emo shows." Not attending these shows is a personal preference, but it doesn't make them go away. Emo is one of most thriving subcultures in today's scene, and one that shouldn't be put on the back burner of any indie music publication. But I digress...

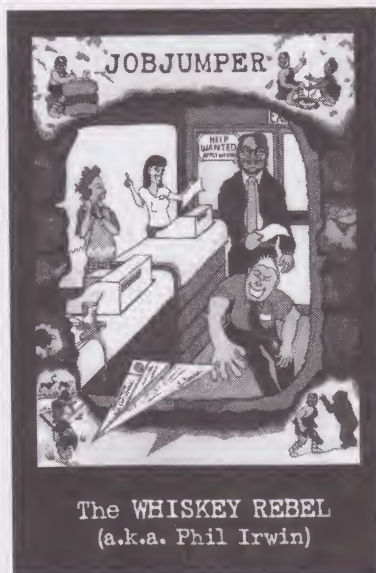
Mr. Bale is hypocritical because he, too, is part of the problem. By not attending any emo or hardcore shows, he is becoming just another hidebound elitist who is causing punk's downfall by limiting himself to the subgenres he believes to be the last shreds of real punk rock. A better route would be to get his mind out of the crusty punk gutter and recognize the brilliance in hardcore and emo music, at the same time trying to bring back that sense of unity. Forget the cliques: give every kind of music a chance, and don't judge anything based on what corporate-owned record label it falls under.

His chastising of the Alkaline Trio

made me sick. They are not only the best band to come out of the independent music scene since Fugazi, they may be the band to save punk rock from its current state, not pour salt in its proverbial wounds. They have become quite popular as of late, but who cares? The Sex Pistols were on a major. The Clash were on a major. Your idols the Ramones were on a major. And you think it makes sense to bash the Alkaline Trio for their "commercialism" when they are on Vagrant, an independent (albeit major-distributed) label? They've achieved success the hard way - by touring their asses off and making some of the most memorable and diverse recordings of the 1990's. And so what if they rode in on a big tour bus? Suddenly, it's not "punk rock" to provide adequate transportation, to get your music out to as many people as possible, to possibly change others' outlooks on music like the Ramones changed yours?

It also appears that a man of your intelligence and excellent writing ability has never actually heard the Alkaline Trio. Maybe you just saw the Trio's name on the same billboard as Blink-182 and

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—Alex Richmond, Philadelphia City Paper

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made the assumption that they were another MTV-friendly pop-punk teenybopper band. Because if you had actually listened to one of their records, a Blink 182 comparison is as far from the truth as you could possibly get. Does Blink-182 sing about depression, bitter rejection, suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse? Does Blink-182 have song titles like "I'm Dying Tomorrow" and "Maybe I'll Catch Fire?" Does Blink-182 successfully bridge the gaps between punk, emo, and hardcore with an unparalleled ease and grace? Does Blink-182 incorporate dark humor into wonderfully written hope- and teared-filled ballads with the analytical substance of any great writer? Call Alkaline what you will, but don't call them generic. However, it wouldn't surprise me if you hadn't even heard the Alkaline Trio. After all, you don't listen to emo. You said it yourself.

Until I see the Alkaline Trio's faces plastered on *Seventeen* and MTV, they aren't killing punk rock. Fuck it, even if they were, they wouldn't be killing punk rock. It's people like you, who find something to complain about in everything under the punk umbrella that doesn't sound like the Sex Pistols, Ramones or the Buzzcocks, and who use their columns as bitching platforms rather than insightful shreds of hope for the indie music industry, that are killing it.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go pop in an Alkaline Trio record. And FYI, I won't be wearing any metaphorical smiley patches. I'd go turn on VH1 right now, but they're probably doing some special on the Sex Pistols and/or the Ramones; it's too bad they're so darned commercial or else I might give their music a chance! See, I can do Bale's job. Maybe I should be writing for *Hit List*.

Sincerely,

John Thomason

Dear John:

If all it took for me to "lose" your respect was to criticize a band you happen to really like - the Alkaline Trio - you obviously never had much respect for me in the first place. However that may be, it's no secret to anyone who is at all familiar with my musical taste that I absolutely loathe emo, no matter how you might wish to define it,

or that I totally burned out on hardcore (thrash-style) punk way back in 1985. As such, comparisons between the Alkaline Trio and Fugazi are bound to leave me completely unimpressed. As much as I've always liked and respected Ian MacKaye as a person, and though I'm fairly certain that the other members of Fugazi are likewise wonderful human beings, the fact is that I've always hated Fugazi's music. Indeed, if truth be told, I've never once heard an emo-type band that I actually liked, a situation which is not likely to change in response to your entreaties. Given my oft-proclaimed musical tastes, there would be no reason whatsoever for me to attend an emo or hardcore or Professional Punk show at this point in time. If you think that there is something hypocritical about that, you obviously didn't understand the main thrust of my column. Far from advocating the restoration of the formerly superficial "unity" of the punk scene, I in fact argued that no one should waste time trying to restore it even if it could be restored, which it obviously can't. The reason is simple: these days the members of the various subdivisions within the so-called punk scene have very little, if anything, in common. For example, I personally have nothing at all in common - musically, culturally, or (I suspect) politically - with the people who like emo music and attend emo concerts. The last thing in the world a dyed-in-the-wool rock'n'roll trashmonger like myself would want to do is hang out with a bunch of spoiled middle class college dorks who gaze at their shoes and sing wimpy, arty, pretentious songs about their pathetically mundane travails. The fact that emo is apparently "thriving" so much these days is a cause for consternation, not celebration. Nothing I say or do will make it go away, unfortunately, but in this magazine it will always remain on the "back burner" - the further back the better. In fact, if I had my way, emo wouldn't be found anywhere near Hit List's stove top.

Nor, given these very same musical preferences, should there be any reason for you to imagine that I would end up liking the Alkaline Trio. And, as it happens, I don't. You rightly surmised that I wasn't all that familiar with the Trio when I first wrote the column that elicited your ire, since at that time I had only heard a couple of their songs. So I took your advice and went back and listened to a couple of Alkaline Trio albums, which only con-

firmed my initial negative impression. True, they didn't sound exactly like Blink-182 clones - they sounded like a mixture of commercially viable Blink-182-style wimp punk and emo, both of which I detest. My negative attitude toward the Trio has nothing at all to do with whether or not their records have been released on a major label - the only thing I care about is whether their music inspires me or bores me to tears. The only reason that I mentioned their big tour bus and emphasized their commercial sound was because Tim Yohannan and the people who have since run Gilman Street claim to care so much about such matters. Recently, for example, the current Gilman collective cancelled a Briefs gig because the band had just signed to Interscope. Apparently, though, their core principles can be compromised somewhat when the club stands to rake in greenbacks from 900 punters.

The bottom line here is that we obviously have radically different musical tastes. In the final analysis, arguing about our respective musical preferences would like arguing about our food preferences - a totally subjective and hence inherently futile course of action. You are perfectly free to like whatever kinds of music you like, and I in turn am free to criticize your musical tastes. Or vice versa. And by the way, I certainly never claimed that punk rock was originally about "accepting" anyone and everyone - on the contrary, from the very outset it was an elitist avant-garde cultural movement, albeit one made up of all sorts of alienated misfits, which was overtly hostile toward, and thoroughly contemptuous of, mainstream society and the people who constitute it.

Jeff Bale

Dear Hit List (namely Jeff):

My question to you is, are you only in business with Mathews due to some financial issues? The reason I say this is that on numerous occasions, indeed in most issues, you promise to be dedicated to fans of trashed out rock'n'roll, yet every issue seems flooded with more and more emo crap (Small Brown Bike, anyone?). I know that Mr. Mathews has a big role in this mag and is also the purveyor of Coldfront Records, and although I applaud his Sin City series, as far as Coldfront goes I fail to see how it fits into the structure of this

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mag. Yet it rears its ugly head all the time. Can't Mr. and Mrs. EmoCore have their own mag? Maybe they could call it *Wimp List* or *Hey, I'm gonna walk around all sullen with my poetry in a small backpack and get girls by pretending that I'm deep and emotional and I don't really need them List*. I mean, come on! At least I haven't had to read any Dave Johnson horseshit for a few issues, and I thank you for that. I know that you can always say, "If you don't like it, don't read it or don't buy it." However, I find it cruel to make promises of true rock and punk coverage every issue and still end up with 50 pages or more of whiny emo shit. I'm sure that people like Dave and Brett are fine guys, but they seem to have no place in a mag whose spirit of rock is reiterated ad nauseum. I unfortunately live smack dab in the middle of Nebraska Huskerville, or Lincoln as it's known to most, so trying to get info on the kinds of bands I like and the ones usually covered by *Hit List* is next to impossible. Therefore, your mag is almost an exclusive source for this. Sure it's only a \$24 per year habit to read your mag, but it's sad to have so many pages littered with shit. It's almost hard to finish a good shit without reading everything worth the aforementioned shit in that time. I mean, at least give me a good four shits' worth of reading.

Also, I'm sure the "Cult War" thing was a fun project, but if I wanted to read up on the Occult and religion I'd go to a library. I mean, if everyone hasn't figured out by now that religion has, is, and will continue to fuck, pervert, rape, and lie to people, then they never will. I will say that I only read a few pieces here and there, so I may be off base in my assumptions, but that only goes to show just how little of a shit I gave about reading it. I know that losing my \$4 every other month will surely not keep food off of your table, but I ask only that you stop with the empty promises.

To some people (like myself) the idea of true rock'n'roll and punk rock the way it was meant to be is beyond important, and to have something that's supposed to be supporting that music be defiled with yet another emo column inside is cruelty. OK, so maybe I'm exaggerating a little. As this will probably be ignored anyway, I only ask that you not let words like "what the fuck does he know, he's from Nebraska" come out. I'm sure they will, but it's a weak argument. You'd be surprised how living in a place where the things you love

almost never come your way can make an even more rabid fan out of you. Not to be a complete asshole, I will say that you do a good job for the most part, and I love your (Bale's) reviews and plugging, if you will, of some great garage comps and such lately. The "Teenage Shutdown" series has been one the best things to happen to me all year, and it's good that a prominent underground mag - aside from *Ugly Things*, of course - is giving that music some coverage. In conclusion, thanks for offering an e-mail address to which I can bitch, and please consider the importance of what you're doing or not doing for your readers. Thanks.

Matt Robinson
Lincoln, NE

P.S. - I also don't care if your mag is printed on tree bark and scotched-taped together. Just make sure that what's inside it is good, and no one will care about your paper stock or bonding system.

Dear Matt:

I must confess that I can't quite understand the reasons why you're even complaining. You yourself admit that getting info on the type of bands we cover in Hit List is virtually impossible in your neck of the woods, and that (aside from Ugly Things) our magazine is one of the few regular sources for info about garage rock'n'roll and punk. So the gist of your complaint seems to be that a mere 75% of our magazine is devoted to the music you like, instead of all 100%. For argument's sake let's just suppose that this is true (although, in actual fact, considerably more than 75% of HL is filled with cool rockin' stuff - I challenge you to provide a single instance where we've devoted anywhere near 50 pages of our magazine to "whiny emo shit"): if so, it would mean that 120 out of 160 pages of every Hit List are devoted to trashed-out rock'n'roll! When you multiply that times six issues per year, that amounts to 720 pages of trashed-out r'n'r per annum. By comparison, Ugly Things usually comes out about once a year, so even if all 200 or so pages of UT were devoted to trashed-out r'n'r, which they aren't, HL would still be providing you with around 520 more r'n'r pages per year than UT. The main difference is that UT devotes the lion's share of

its coverage to 60's sounds, whereas we devote most of ours to punk stuff (from 1977 to the present). We also have more social and political commentary. So my question is simple: what other magazine provides you with more coverage of trashed-out r'n'r than HL? How can you honestly characterize anything I've said in this context as an "empty promise"?

As for the occasional emo or hardcore stuff that appears in HL, from a purely musical standpoint I don't like it any more than you do. But, as you correctly surmise, Brett and I are equal partners in this magazine. Even though I am primarily responsible for the substantive contents of HL, and he is primarily responsible for HL's business affairs - after all, we have to play to our strengths, not our weaknesses - if he really feels strongly about featuring a particular band that I don't particularly like in the magazine, it would be totally asshole of me to callously refuse his requests. Sometimes compromises have to be made by both of us. Plus, he rightly points out that if our coverage was too narrowly focussed, it might end up seriously limiting our readership. The sad truth is that trashed-out r'n'r seems to be a dying breed of music, and as such there aren't nearly as many cool rock'n'rollers out there as there are, say, emo dorks.

As for your complaints about our publication of serious investigative articles, I am not even remotely sympathetic. As much as I love rock'n'roll, it's not the only important thing in the world. Indeed, if I had my way, we'd be publishing serious investigative articles about important but overlooked aspects of fringe politics and culture in every single issue of Hit List, since it's one of the things that sets our magazine apart from all of our competitors (excepting Punk Planet, which covers much more conventional political and social topics in a far more conventional fashion, usually without the extensive scholarly research that goes into our articles.). To suggest that all one needs to know about religious movements is that they all "fuck, pervert, rape, and lie to people" is absurdly simple-minded. Although you personally may not have found our "Cult Wars" series of interest, the fact is that I personally received accolades from academics all over the world for having the guts to publish something that was not only totally original, but virtually taboo in the scholarly literature. Moreover, even if everyone else in the world shared your

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apparent lack of interest in the world beyond the narrow confines of rock'n'roll, we'd still be running articles of that type because I'm the editor and I damn well feel like doing it. In fact, if I had to restrict myself solely to publishing articles about rock bands, most of which are utterly insignificant in the overall scheme of things, I wouldn't even bother putting out Hit List. In this connection, I shall have recourse to the immortal words of RICKY NELSON (from "Garden Party"): "You know you can't please everyone / So you got to please yourself." Amen to that.

In short, I suggest that you recognize and appreciate our commitment to bringing you a magazine chock full of trashed-out r'n'r on a regular basis instead of chastising us for not covering only trashed-out r'n'r. Our glass should be perceived as more than 3/4 full of bad ass r'n'r, not as less than 1/4 devoid of it. After all, what magazine "respects the rock" more than we do? If you feel that you can do a better job, perhaps you should try putting out a 'zine that exclusively covers the type of music that you yourself like. You'll soon discover that it's not nearly as easy as you may think, and that you may end up with a tiny regular audience of less

than 100 readers.

Jeff Bale

P.S. - The terms "cult" and "occult" are not synonymous, as you seem to think.

SUPER DOH!

Dear Hit List:

I just got Hit List vol. 3, no. 2 and went straight for Jeff's column, like I typically do. But whoa, what the hell was Jeff talking about? I know that Bo Diddley has spread himself seriously thin musically these days, but biologically the guy's not dead yet! Matter of fact, he's getting ready to tour the US and Europe.


Buzz
WMSE
Milwaukee

Dear Buzz:

Thanks a lot for correcting my egregious error, which Mike Stax had already

pointed out to me. What happened was that a normally reliable friend contacted me just as we were going to press with the news that Bo Diddley had died. It turned out that he got Bo confused with blues great John Lee Hooker. The lesson here is clear: never print anything without confirming its accuracy from more than one source. We apologize to Bo for prematurely eulogizing him, and to all of Bo's fans for temporarily depressing the hell out of them. And while I'm on the subject of silly errors I've recently made, mainly due to haste, I should also point out that I reversed the order of appearance of the two EMBROOKS CDs in the review section: the moody and garagey "was their first album, whereas the neo-freakbeat" was their second album. Finally, in my review of the A-CADS CD last issue, I mistakenly referred to their amazing blast "Hungry For Love" as an original. In truth it was a cover of a fairly famous JOHNNY KIDD & THE PIRATES song, albeit one which I hadn't heard in many a year. However that may be, I should point out that the A-CADS' super-crunchy, guitar-heavy version is 100 times better than the original.

Jeff Bale



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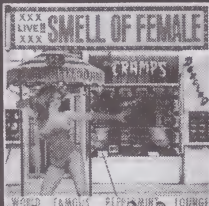
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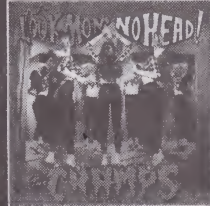
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WELCOME TO MY WORLD

"The pictures of airplanes flying into buildings - fires burning, huge structures collapsing - have filled us with disbelief, terrible sadness, and a quiet, unyielding anger."

-George W. Bush

Few indeed have been the times when I've agreed with our current verbally-challenged (and perhaps also mentally-challenged) president, but I concur wholeheartedly with his statement above. Moreover, to my very great surprise, I have so far been impressed with the way that he and his advisors have handled the exceedingly serious crisis now facing our country and, indeed, the entire world (at least up until this moment — the morning of 17 October 2001). Instead of immediately launching ineffectual missile attacks or air strikes in a risk-averse fit of anger, as Bill Clinton did in response to the 1998 terrorist attacks on the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar al-Salam, he and his advisors have been painstakingly building an international coalition, consulting with both allies and former enemies, transferring select military forces to the Middle East and South Asia, taking steps to improve security in this country, and otherwise behaving in a restrained and entirely responsible way. More recently, he has authorized the initiation of a bombing campaign against terrorist and Taliban military targets in Afghanistan. At the same time, he has proclaimed that America will not rest until the perpetrators and sponsors of the recent terrorist attacks on our homeland have been held accountable for their deeds. One can only hope that he keeps this promise, no matter what the cost.

At around 7:30 PST on the morning of 11 September 2001, I was sleeping soundly in my bed, in a state of blissful ignorance, when I was abruptly awakened by a frantic pounding on my bedroom door. I cursed aloud, yelled out "what" in a far from agreeable manner, and thought to myself, "this had better be pretty damned important." Needless to say, I soon learned that it was far more important than I could ever have imagined. With tears in her eyes, my roommate blurted out that terrorists had attacked the World Trade Center in New York, and that one of the towers had collapsed. Although at first finding this difficult to comprehend, I immediately jumped up, half-asleep, and hurried out to the living room to turn on my TV. The images that appeared on the screen were so astonishing that for a moment I thought I must have been dreaming, or perhaps watching a preview of special effects from a forthcoming Hollywood action movie. Alas, it soon became clear that I was indeed wide awake and that this was no fictionalized

representation of a terrorist attack, but a pitiless example of the real thing. Moreover, the actual attack was far more spectacular than any movie effects could possibly have been. I sat there stunned for several hours, watching the footage of the second passenger jet crashing into the second tower, the subsequent collapse of that tower, and the belated collapse of the first tower, over and over again, with an ever-growing sense of horror. Even though I remained in a state of emotional shock for some time,

JEFF BALE

READ BETWEEN THE LINES



the very first thing that popped into my rational mind was the name 'Usamah ibn Ladin, the financier and organizer of the only Islamist terrorist network — al-Qa'idah (the Base) and its affiliated components — which appears to be capable of carrying out such a complex operation on this scale. From that point on my initial wide-eyed incredulity has slowly been transformed into a burning,

intensely-focussed anger, since for a number of years I've been warning colleagues and students alike that ibn Ladin's followers would, at some point in the not-too-distant future, be likely to carry out a major terrorist attack on U.S. soil. I only wish that my prognostications had turned out *not* to be accurate.

Whatever else one may say, this was undoubtedly the worst intelligence failure since 7 December, 1941, when the Japanese made a successful surprise attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor. And like the Japanese attack, which resulted in a

mere 1600 deaths and was essentially restricted to a military installation, the recent terrorist assault constitutes an unambiguous act of war. In this instance, however, it was not an act of war perpetrated by a sovereign state, but rather one carried out by a diffuse transnational terrorist network, albeit one that has been protected and otherwise aided by a number of regimes, including those of Pakistan and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Then too, elements of the Saudi establishment and the Iraqi intelligence services have also lent ibn Ladin a hand, but much

***Whether people
recognize it or not, the
United States is now
essentially at war,
no matter how
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"asymmetrical" it may be.***

HIT SQUAD

more discreetly and covertly. Ibn Ladin, the millionaire son of a Yemen-born Saudi Arabian construction magnate, has not only helped to bankroll Islamist insurgencies in places like Chechnya and Kashmir, but has openly declared war on the United States and indeed on all Americans, combatants and non-combatants alike, in a series of *fatwas*, i.e., Muslim religious pronouncements. Whether people recognize it or not, the United States is now essentially at war, no matter how unconventional and "asymmetrical" it may be. And, like it or not, being in a state of war requires degrees of self-sacrifice and the types of heightened security restrictions that would never be tolerated in peacetime. Although a braindead left-wing weekly in the Bay Area, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, ran a banner headlined "Let's not start World War III" on 19 September 2001, it should be pointed out that hostile groups of foreign religious fanatics *started* this war by making direct attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. It's now up to the United States to retaliate and win it.

Those of us who are experts on international terrorism and possess specialized knowledge about Middle Eastern history and politics have been especially busy of late trying to analyze the current situation and devise or evaluate appropriate responses for dealing with the problems posed by al-Qa'idah in particular and radical Islamism in general. Although many readers of *Hit List* may be aware of my long-standing involvement in the punk rock and underground music scenes, only a few probably realize that I have also been carrying out advanced academic research on arcane subjects like international terrorism, intelligence and covert operations, unconventional warfare, and political extremism for the past twenty years, or that that I studied Middle Eastern and Central Asian history — as well as the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish languages — for several years, first at the University of Michigan and then briefly at Berkeley. Furthermore, in college courses I've recently taught on the subject of terrorism, I have repeatedly emphasized the ever-growing danger posed by religious-based terrorism (whether it be Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, or cultic); warned that we should expect a major terrorist attack on U.S. soil by Islamists in the near future (since we'd been extraordinarily lucky, first to escape massive destruction and death in the earlier 1993 truck bombing of the World Trade Center, and second, to uncover subsequent terrorist plots by Islamist cells operating in America); and predicted that, inspired by the example of the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, other religious terrorists would be using weapons of mass destruction to attack the U.S. within ten years. I hoped against hope that I was being unnecessarily alarmist, but I was painfully aware of just how much of a danger such groups posed. Sadly, the events of 11 September only served to confirm my worst suspicions and fears, and since then some very sinister people — probably members of other covert Islamist cells operating in the U.S. — have been mailing packets containing anthrax spores to various high-profile targets in an apparent effort to generate widespread panic.

Despite the self-evident seriousness of the threat that we now face, ignoramuses of all stripes have been putting their own spin on these traumatic events and, in the process, polluting the political, intellectual, and moral climate with their nonsensical viewpoints. Before 11 September, most of these jackasses couldn't have even located Afghanistan and Pakistan on a map, much less Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, or Turkmenistan. Nor would they

have been able to distinguish between Muslims and Sikhs, Pashtuns and Hazaras, or Chechens and Uighurs, much less the Sunni and Shi'a variants of Islam. Fewer still would have ever heard of Pakistan's formidable intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), much less the Afghan *mujahidin* leader Gulbeddin Hekmatyar, the chief recipient of covert American aid (via ISI intermediaries) during the anti-Soviet war. Such ignoramuses can, as per usual, be found on all sides of the political spectrum.

From the center of that spectrum, for example, one may note the remarks by some solipsistic Congressman (whose name now escapes me) to the effect that America is considered to be a "symbol of decency" throughout the world. Doh! Anyone who is familiar with the extent and virulence of anti-Americanism in various parts of the world, especially in the Third World, can only wonder what parallel universe this fellow has been living in. Even if one grants that much of this anti-Americanism among foreigners stems from barely-disguised feelings of inferiority or outright envy and is often of the mindless, knee-jerk variety, the fact remains that America is widely viewed as an arrogant, exploitive bully by people in other countries, and not without reason given its stubborn pursuance of often counterproductive and sometimes overtly repressive foreign policies. Another mind-boggling example of centrist myopia was the repeated claim (on "60 Minutes") by Tommy Thompson, currently Secretary of Health and Human Services, that our government is well-prepared to deal with the extraordinary threat posed by biological and chemical terrorism. Not to worry, says Thompson. Alas, nothing could be further from the truth, as virtually *every* expert on the subject can attest. Unfortunately, within a few days of Thompson's supremely confident but wholly misleading remarks, packages contaminated with anthrax began mysteriously arriving at media headquarters and have since been intentionally sent to members of Congress. It seems highly likely that the United States will be subjected to a serious terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction sometime within the next few years. Such an attack could lead to tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or perhaps even millions of casualties, provided that a proper dissemination method for the lethal pathogen is employed. Although some have argued that it is beyond the technical capabilities of most terrorists to carry out such an attack properly, which is perfectly true, the dire economic straits of so many ex-Soviet scientists (including those who used to work for Biopreparat, the top secret government agency responsible for developing immense stockpiles of the world's most lethal biological weapons, including "cocktails" that no vaccines or antibiotics can cope with) make it likely that some of them will end up selling their services and/or products to the highest bidders, whether these bidders are organized criminal groups, dictatorial states like Saddam Husayn's Iraq, apocalyptic religious cults, or well-funded terrorist groups.

On the right side of the political spectrum, there is the embarrassing spectacle of nativist know-nothing vigilantes who are taking out their anger and frustration on anyone who they think looks like a "sand nigger," a "camel jockey," or a "rag-head." These people are not only utter bozos — in some instances they have gone so far as to attack or abuse resident Hindus and Sikhs, neither of whom are even Muslims, much less Arabs — but also despicable cowards of the worst sort who gang up and beat on innocent people or fire weapons at them from the shadows. (This is not a xenophobic reaction peculiar to America, of course, since hapless Westerners are now being physically attacked in countries throughout the Middle East and South

Asia.) Fortunately, the U.S. government has mounted a very serious effort to arrest and punish the perpetrators of these heinous acts. Then there is Jerry Falwell, who sought to exploit the situation by stupidly claiming that too much "secularism" had led to the calamity that befell our nation on 11 September. Apparently, it never occurred to him that religious fanaticism, intolerance, and bigotry of the sort that he regularly displays lie at the very root of this tragedy. As a friend of mine perceptively noted, Falwell and his rigidly moralistic ilk are the American equivalents of the Taliban, though mercifully they are not yet in control of any states. Carrying this analogy further, Ibn Ladin and his cohorts can be viewed as the Muslim equivalents of Christian anti-abortion bombers. Unfortunately, though, they have far more public support throughout the Muslim world than homegrown religious terrorists do here.

Last, and certainly least, are the increasingly nauseating remnants of the left, who tend to fall into one of four categories. First, there is that tiny handful of "professional anti-Americans" who have become virtual celebrities among "progressive" college students and countercultural know-nothings: Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Michael Parenti, Ramsey Clark, Edward Said, and the "biggest" expert of them all, Michael Moore. No matter what the context, these inveterate America-haters — several of whom manage to rake in six figure salaries despite their incessant peddling of fashionably virulent anti-Western propaganda — can always be relied upon to denounce their own country for its supposed sins, whether real or imagined. None of them, of course, have the guts to give up the freedoms and comfort they regularly enjoy and exploit here by renouncing their American citizenship and emigrating to one of the many repressive foreign countries whose anti-American rhetoric they foolishly parrot. My only regret is that the very society they so frequently castigate seems inexplicably anxious to keep rewarding them for their unrelenting hatred and disloyalty.

Second, there is a slightly larger circle of unregenerate Marxist-Leninist fundamentalists who, operating under the cover of a variety of innocuous-sounding front groups, try to pass themselves off as "humanitarians" and "peace activists" even though they uncritically support the world's most barbaric regimes (so long as these remain virulently anti-American) in their own sectarian publications. Among their political idols are the "model" governments of North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, and Iraq, not to mention murderous terrorist groups like Sendero Luminoso. In recent times, the most media-savvy of these deceptive front groups has probably been the International Action Center — a creature of the thoroughly odious Workers World Party — whose spokespeople are shamelessly allowed to pass themselves off as genuine peaceniks by the mainstream and left-

wing media alike. (For more on the IAC and the WWP, see the investigative article by Kevin Coogan elsewhere in this very same issue of *Hit List*). Other ostensibly "progressive" front organizations have been set up by such well-known "pacifist" groups as the (Maoist) Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and the (Trotskyist) Independent Socialist Organization (ISO). The latter recently published a boneheaded brochure entitled "Don't Turn Tragedy into a War," as if the 11 September events had been some type of natural disaster!

Third, there is a still larger group of knee-jerk anti-capitalist and anti-globalization protesters, many of whom are associated, at least superficially, with certain trendy youth countercultures. Such protesters are frequently bored, privileged, or guilt-ridden youths who fancy themselves to be horribly "oppressed" and

have become so alienated from their own societies that they now resort to any pretext whatsoever, no matter how absurd, to justify taking to the streets and throwing a public temper tantrum. So it was that an "anti-globalization" protest scheduled for late September in Washington, D.C., was instantly transformed into an "anti-war" protest once it became clear that our government intended to defend the country by taking aggressive action against Islamist terrorist networks and their supporters, a response that is not only perfectly justifiable from a moral standpoint but also absolutely necessary from a political and military

Apparently, no act of foreign aggression, no matter how blatant and destructive, could have persuaded them to temporarily abandon their mindless anti-Americanism.

point of view. Apparently, no act of foreign aggression, no matter how blatant and destructive, could have persuaded them to temporarily abandon their mindless anti-Americanism or call off their demonstration altogether, much less to protest against the most tangible contemporary threats to our freedom and democracy: religious extremism of the most intolerant sort and terrorism directed against innocent American and European citizens. As one might expect from the spoiled children that they tend to be, everything is always "all about them" and their causes *du jour*.

The fourth and largest component of these leftist remnants is made up of genuine but hopelessly naïve peaceniks, many of whom are veterans of the 1960s counterculture or the New Age movement. These are the sorts of lefty liberals who compose treacly slogans like "Love is Stronger than Hate", "Have You Hugged Your Children Today?", "Violence is Never the Answer", "Abolish the Death Penalty", and "Can't We All Just Get Along?", and who honestly seem to believe — despite the omnipresence of incontrovertible evidence to the contrary — that human strife can be completely abolished if only people of good faith would

HIT SQUAD

join hands and cooperate with one another. Not to put too fine a point on it, these would-be "do-gooders" unwittingly function as the "useful idiots" of the authoritarian left, i.e., the well-meaning, good-hearted people who can easily be, and almost invariably are, mercilessly deceived, exploited, and manipulated by hardline Leninist vanguards, foreign intelligence services, and (most recently) Islamist apologists at home and abroad. In the absence of these masses of saps, who willingly ignore the presence of truly malevolent individuals and groups operating throughout the world, the rest of the left probably wouldn't be able to muster enough support (off campus) to organize a free barbeque. However, as long as these people operate within a veritable fantasy world of their own creation, one which is rooted largely in wishful thinking and has virtually no relationship at all to the real world, they will continue to constitute whatever remains of the left's popular base.

As they invariably do, the sophists of the left have relied upon diverse rhetorical stratagems and bogus arguments to justify their refusal to support any American action undertaken to punish the sponsors of the 11 September attack. First, they have once again resurrected the widespread but false claim that "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter," which implies that terrorism is a wholly subjective term of abuse rather than a concept with an objective meaning. In the predictably dimwitted missive sent out by Michael Moore in the immediate aftermath of 11 September, which essentially blamed the success of the

attacks on the fact that security guards at airports were underpaid (doh!), quotation marks were placed around the word terrorism, as if such a phenomenon didn't really exist outside the sphere of propaganda.

In order to avoid the temptation of ascribing the label "terrorist" to every group which resorts to violence that one doesn't like, as is all too common, it is necessary to define the term accurately. Terrorism is the use (or threatened use) of violence against instrumental victims, selected for their symbolic or representative value, as a means of instilling anxiety in, transmitting messages to, and manipulating the perceptions and behavior of, a wider target audience. Terrorist acts are thus by nature triadic rather than dyadic. They invariably involve *three* parties — the perpetrator, the victim, and the target audience — and the key relationship is between the perpetrator and the target audience. Paradoxically, the individual who suffers the actual physical violence has the least intrinsic importance, and indeed is often selected at random except insofar as he or she represents a larger category of people. It is precisely this feature which distinguishes acts of terrorism from simple assaults upon political enemies. To constitute terrorism, an act of violence has to be specifically intended by the perpetrator to manipulate the perceptions and behavior of a wider target audience. From this it follows that neither violent actions which inadvertently terrorize or alter the behavior patterns of a particular group (e.g., a series of rapes in a specific neighborhood), nor those aimed at physically eliminating a specific enemy (e.g., an assassination) are examples of terrorism in the strict sense of the term — unless, of course, the perpetrators mainly intended to deliver some sort of message to a larger audience. A certain group might, of course,

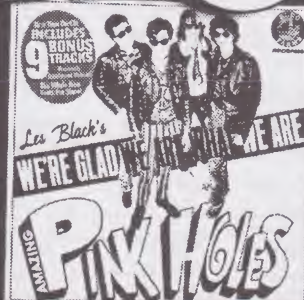
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try to fulfill two objectives at once, such as eliminating a specific police official *and* transmitting a warning to his colleagues, but the latter would have to take precedence for this action to be interpreted primarily as an act of terrorism.

Viewed in this way, terrorism is nothing more than a violent technique of manipulation. Like any other technique, it can be used by anyone, whatever their ideological orientation or relationship to the state. It can be employed on behalf of state power or in opposition to state power, by left-wingers, right-wingers, or centrists, and for an infinite variety of causes. It is for this very reason that pithy phrases such as "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter" are misleading, if not entirely mistaken, except insofar as they reflect the generally partisan and unsystematic way that such labels are applied. From a technical point of view, "one man's terrorist" should invariably also be "another man's terrorist," since regardless of the cause involved a terrorist can be identified purely by the methods he or she chooses to employ. Whether or not one sympathizes with a given perpetrator's underlying political motives, every individual who commits an act of violence which is specifically designed to influence or manipulate a wider target audience is, strictly speaking, a terrorist. Period. All other factors are superfluous, and indeed only serve to obscure this fundamental reality. To restrict the term solely to one's enemies is thus an error of the first order, one that is every bit as foolish as arguing that there is no such thing as terrorism. On the basis of this definition, the attacks carried out on 11 September were indisputably acts of terrorism. The second stratagem employed by the left has been to claim that the perpetrators of the attack, although Muslims, were not representative of all Muslims. Therefore, they argue, this event should not be used to demonize or persecute Muslims, either at home or abroad. This view is reflected in the dopey slogan that has been endlessly parroted by left-wing demonstrators on various campuses: "No Racist Scapegoating." The problem is that all this is nothing more than an attack on straw men, since *no* responsible person has ever claimed that the terrorists were typical Muslims who were in any way representative of their co-religionists. Apart from one imbecilic congressman from the South, anonymous racists blathering on the internet, and a handful of ignorant vigilantes who committed individual acts of violence against people they believed were of Middle Eastern origin, no one has scapegoated anybody — except, of course, for the terrorists themselves, who engaged in a blatant act of religious and national scapegoating by first declaring war on and then intentionally targeting American citizens, irrespective of whether these citizens had played any role whatsoever in policy-making or had committed any so-called "crimes" against Islam. From the outset the government publicly condemned vigilante attacks directed against resident Arabs and Muslims in the United States and has since moved vigorously to arrest and punish the perpetrators of such attacks. Moreover, from Bush on down, government spokespeople have repeatedly insisted that their ire was not directed against Muslims *per se*, but against the organizers and sponsors of the 11 September attacks, which is entirely appropriate. Even rabidly right-wing radio talk show hosts have displayed unusual restraint in this respect.

If anything, the government has bent over backwards in the other direction, in the sense that they have repeatedly portrayed Islam as an inherently peaceful and tolerant religion. In point of fact, Islam is no more (or less) tolerant and peaceful than the other monotheistic religions "of the book" with which it has been so historically intertwined, Christianity and Judaism. In their messianic and militant forms, all three of these religions have

JEFFBALE

displayed a marked intolerance toward — and committed grievous crimes against — so-called "unbelievers." It is certainly true, however, that the distinction between "Islam" and "Islamism" is a fundamental one. "Islam", a word derived from the Arabic root form *aslama*, which means "to submit" (in this context, to submit to the will of God), is the equivalent of the terms "Christianity," "Judaism," or "Hinduism," i.e., it is a neutral designation that applies to that particular religion in the most general sense of the term. Likewise, the term "Islamic" is a neutral adjective equivalent to "Christian" or "Jewish." In contrast, the term "Islamism" refers to a radical anti-Western political ideology that (falsely) claims to be the purest form of the Muslim faith. In that sense, it is more akin to the terms used for certain other radical political ideologies, such as "Communism" or "Fascism". To put it another way, all Islamists are Muslims, but only a relatively small proportion of Muslims are Islamists.

The origins of Islamism can be traced back to the Jama'at al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (Muslim Brotherhood), an organization founded in Egypt in the first quarter of the 20th century, as well as to the ideas propounded by various Muslim intellectuals, including Abu al-Ala al-Maududi and Sayyid Qutb. Although early Islamist movements were later suppressed or marginalized by a number of secularized nationalist and "Arab socialist" regimes, including that of Jamal 'Abd al-Nasr in Egypt, the failure of those regimes to solve the fundamental problems afflicting their nations and societies, coupled with the traumatic impact of events such as the Iranian Revolution, the Lebanese Civil War (and Israel's subsequent invasion), and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, led to a dramatic resurgence of popular support for Islamism in the 1980s. It was during this period that most of today's most dangerous Islamist terrorist groups were created, including Hizb'allah (the Party of God) in Lebanon (which was founded and sponsored by Khomeini's Pasdaran [Revolutionary Guards]), the Harakat al-Muqawamah al-Islamiyyah (HAMAS: Islamic Resistance Movement; also an acronym for "hope") in Palestine, al-Jama'a al-Islami (the Islamic Group) and al-Jihad al-Islami (Islamic Holy War) in Egypt, and the Groupes Islamiques Armées (GIA: Armed Islamic Groups) in Algeria. Most of these organizations are now allies, if not components, of Ibn Ladin's al-Qa'idah network, along with a number of newer formations created by Muslim veterans of the Afghan war. By definition, then, Islamism is a fanatically intolerant and quasi-totalitarian form of Islam, and Islamists are exactly the sort of reactionary bigots that one might expect the left to loathe.

Yet now that America has become the declared enemy of the Islamists, the left has already begun rallying to their support and demanding that we try to "understand" them rather than wage war on them — just as they had previously rallied in support of Saddam Husayn, an utterly ruthless and murderous dictator, during the Gulf War, and in support of Slobodan Milosevic and the "Serbian people," who had been busily trying to carve out a "Greater Serbia" by means of genocide and "ethnic cleansing," during NATO's air campaign in the Balkans. Apparently, no foreign enemy is too despicable to obtain the uncritical support of today's loony left. At this point, one can't imagine a single regime or organization anywhere in the world, no matter how repulsive or dangerous they may be, that the remnants of the left would support a U.S. military action against. If it was now

HIT SQUAD

1939 or 1941, we can be sure that this same left would be organizing protests against America's "imperialistic" intervention in World War II and urging that we "understand" the Nazis and Japanese ultranationalists.

The simple truth is that no matter what the U.S. does, the left will nowadays invariably denounce it. When the U.S. does not intervene to stop genocide, as we did not in Rwanda, the left accuses the government of being racist and heartless. When the U.S. does undertake a humanitarian intervention to stop genocide, as we did in the Balkans, the left accuses the government of having hidden "imperialist" designs. When the left despises a foreign regime, as it did South Africa during the apartheid era, it self-righteously demands that the U.S. government impose economic sanctions and criticizes it for dragging its feet (even though the common people always suffer the most when sanctions are imposed on authoritarian regimes). When the U.S. government does impose sanctions, as it was entitled to do in Iraq — according to the U.N.'s own charter — because Saddam Husayn was systematically violating crucial aspects of the cease-fire agreement that he had signed concerning weapons of mass destruction, the left accuses it of committing genocide against the "Iraqi people."

Needless to say, not a peep was uttered by the left during all the years when Husayn was murdering and gassing tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis and Kurds in his country. Apparently, the left's belated concern for the "suffering of the Iraqi people" was based entirely on its sudden realization that the issue could be exploited in such a way as to denigrate America. If its past practices provide any indication, the left will soon be blathering on and on about the "suffering of the Afghan people" now that the U.S. is militarily engaged against the Taliban. Strangely enough, I don't recall hearing these same leftists expressing any concern at all about the "suffering of the Afghan people" in recent years, when the average Afghan were being brutally repressed by the Taliban. One of the few exceptions to this noticeable silence were spokespeople from the Fund for a Feminist Majority, who sought to use the case of the Taliban to claim (falsely) that women were victimized *everywhere*.

The hypocritical and instrumental exploitation of the suffering of others by the American and European left could scarcely be clearer. Where was their vaunted concern for the "Afghan people" when the Taliban were stoning women to death for adultery and executing homosexuals in soccer stadiums? (For that matter, where was their "concern for the Cuban people" when Castro was quarantining and imprisoning Cubans with AIDS?) Why do the very same "progressives" who angrily demand that our government severely punish Christian anti-abortion terrorists at home suddenly become outraged when that same government seeks to punish their no less fanatical and violent Muslim equiv-

alents? The truth is that the left's predictably misguided responses to the 11 September attacks have once again revealed it to be utterly bankrupt from a political, moral, and philosophical point of view. I for one hope that this same left continues to peddle its mindless anti-American rhetoric, as it no doubt will, since the only result in the current climate will be its ever-increasing and well-deserved marginalization on the fringes of American society. There's no longer any hope of stopping the rot in the universities and the educational establishment, of course, but outside of that rarefied and hopelessly compromised intellectual milieu even the dopiast American has a clear understanding of what needs to be done. That is the topic that I shall deal with in my next column.

If anything positive has come out of the disastrous attacks on 11 September, other than a renewed sense of national purpose and social solidarity, it is that Americans have finally been forced, at least temporarily, to remove their heads from their asses and pay attention to the world outside of their own comfortable, solipsistic universe.

For decades most Americans have had the luxury to be able to be complacent about, and utterly oblivious to, the crucial events that took place elsewhere in the world, including those which were profoundly impacted by our own policies. This is no longer the case. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that there had been a run on books about the Middle East in the wake of 11 September. It was as if many Americans had finally woken up and realized that they actually

needed to learn something about the outside world, instead of simply obsessing about their own material circumstances and psychological well-being. This was indeed a refreshing and long-overdue change, though sadly it may not last long. It was very strange indeed to see regular Americans flocking to bookstores to buy the types of tomes that have long been a staple of my own arcane research efforts, since it very often happens that I am one of the only people who purchases such specialized books and the *very first person* who checks them out from university libraries. That's what the peculiar title of this column alludes to. Welcome to my world, motherfuckers. Now you too can immerse yourselves for a while in the same sordid subjects that my colleagues and I wallow in every single day. This is our life, day in and day out, and now, it appears, it is also impinging on the lives of many other Americans. If the circumstances weren't so terrible, I'd be tempted to laugh at you all and say "I told you so." But I'll refrain, because now is the time for responsible Americans to come together, not to engage in petty, internecine strife.

FOR THOSE ABOUT TO PUNK OUT, I SALUTE YOU

As important as rock 'n' roll is to me, there are in fact things that are more important. Musical commentary will return next issue. ☎

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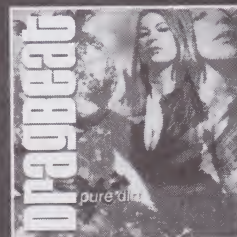
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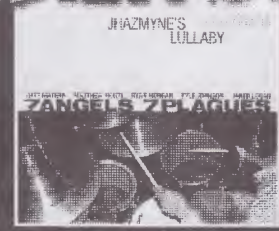
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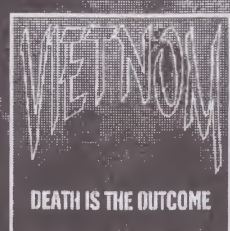
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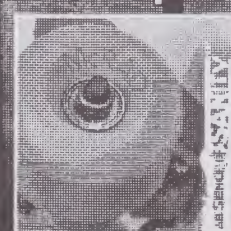
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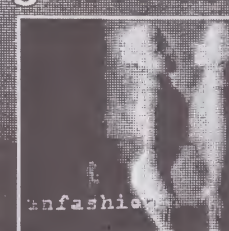
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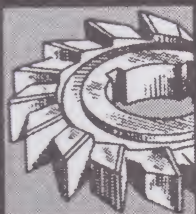
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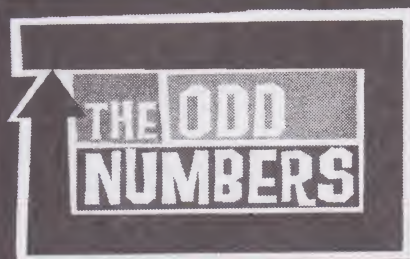
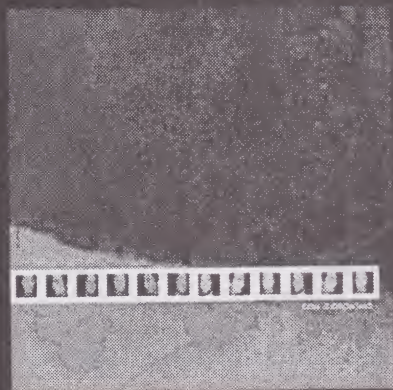
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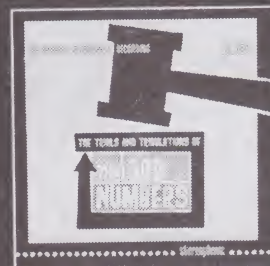
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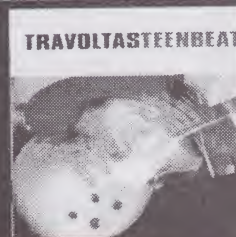
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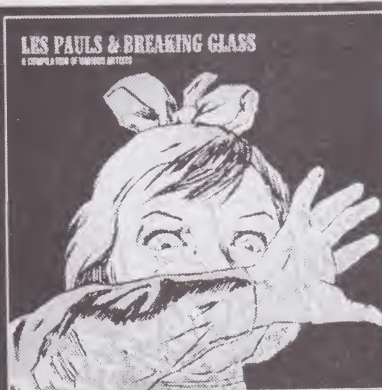
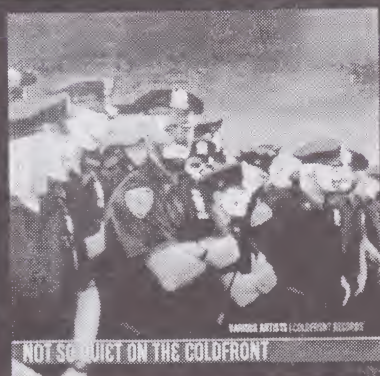


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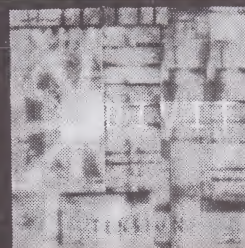
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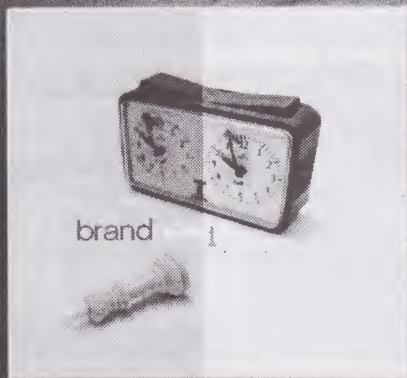


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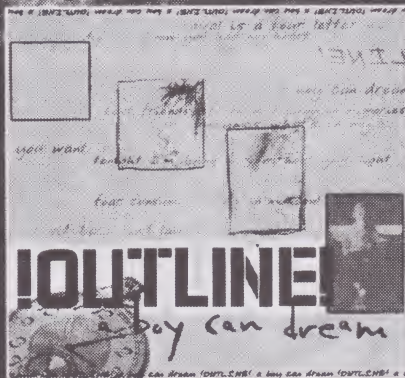
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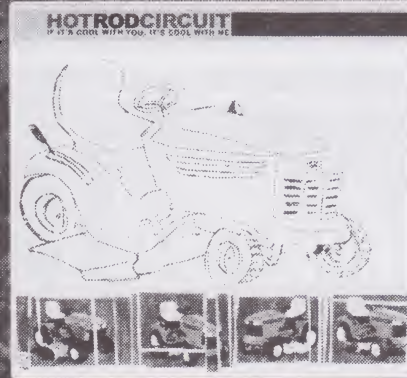
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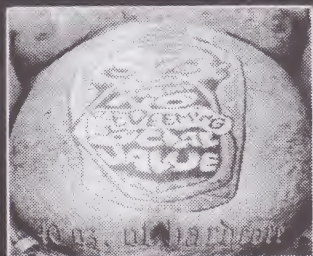
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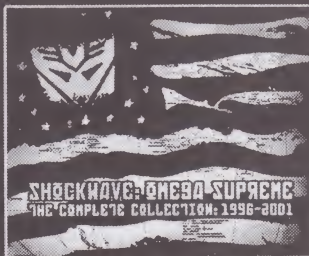
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"MAJOR LABELS SUCK, AND BANDS ON MAJOR LABELS SUCK, AND THEY SHOULD BE BOYCOTTED BECAUSE... OH, WAIT, I LOVE THIS SONG..."

There is a cool label here in Berkeley called Adeline Records. I'm sure you know about them, and I'm sure you know their affiliation with GREEN DAY's singer Billie Joe Armstrong. They had a label showcase here in Berkeley at Gilman St. last month, which I attended. I think they have an amazing lineup of bands, and one of my favorites, the INFLUENTS were headlining. (If you're not familiar with these characters, imagine GREEN DAY's songwriting talents combined with the feel of early REPLACEMENTS. Actually, don't even bother thinking, just go buy their damn record.) After blowing through an amazingly flawless and brilliant set, INFLUENTS frontman Jason White (also of the East Bay's legendary PINHEAD GUNPOWDER), said they had a few friends in the audience, and asked if they would get up and play a song or two. Everybody'd already been gawking at the three members of GREEN DAY who'd been lurking about enjoying the show, but certainly nobody expected what followed. What's funny here is that most of these kids who frequent Gilman St., if asked on the way in to the show, would have given you this huge ramble about how they sucked, they hated them, they sold out, etc... It's funny, because all of these moronic kids have been running around for the past 10 years with a 3" hard on, their hands dirty from a mixture of having been brain washed by some half-assed magazine that's long-outlived its purpose and use; leaving their suburban homes to go sit in the gutter on Telegraph to be "punk"(read: "cool", non-thinking, re-gurgitating sheep who dress alike, think alike, act alike, and conform to any and all forms of the "acceptable" counterculture in an effort to be a non — conformist).reciting this same babble *ad nauseum*.

So what happens? GREEN DAY takes the stage. I shit you not, these same kids, sporting tattoos on their faces, buttons on their jackets denouncing major labels, dirty spiky bi-hawks and tri-hawks, push their way to the front of the stage, mowing over women and children, and start bouncing up and down like little school girls, and singing EVERY WORD! You've got to be kidding me. Are your feelings only true when you can make a bold statement that somehow aligns you with some false "punk-rock" ideology that is so outdated that it's disgusting? Granted, GREEN DAY ripped through a good half-hour of songs, and only played two that weren't off of the first two records, but the ones off of the major label releases had the sheep going even crazier.

Twenty years ago, there was a distinct line between majors, and indies. Twenty years ago, this babble might have made a lot

more sense. The last decade has seen so many of these "cool" underground labels floated, supported, and mostly distributed by the majors. GREEN DAY hit a wall where they had outgrown their label. Shit happens when you're an amazing band. They would show up to shows and sell hundreds of records at the merch table because the demand was greater than the supply and kids couldn't pick up the discs in the stores. If you're in a band, you want to get your music to your fans. If you can argue with this point, you are *obviously* not in a band. So GREEN



Shit happens when you're an amazing band.

DAY "sold out", and went and made one of the best power pop-punk records ever. What a bunch of pricks! How dare they do that? And they follow up this action and further cater to the mainstream by cranking out the most offensive, aggressive, and possibly their *best* record to date with "Insomniac". What a bunch of pricks!! Now I see why we're so mad, children. Did the backlash suck? Sure. Is it GREEN DAY's fault? Fuck no. And now for some reason, only through a chance happening, I'm watching what I used to watch every weekend for years, but for the first time in almost a decade. I learned how to play guitar while watching GREEN DAY at Gilman, not only by

watching every chord, but by Billie showing me shit on the edge of the stage after their sets. If you are going to denounce a band for making a bad decision, or altering their mission to cater to the majors, I think you're probably better off picking a band that might give you a little more evidence for your argument. Saying you're sad that they

got so popular through good songwriting, hard work, and great performances that you can no longer see them in the intimate settings that you're accustomed to is one thing, but to call a band who are doing exactly *what* they wanted — exactly *how* they wanted — sell outs? Here's a hint — that's what was *supposed* to be the true definition of "punk".

My musical tastes have changed a lot over the last decade, and it's pretty rare that I pull out a GREEN DAY record to rock out to now-a-days, but I couldn't be happier to have their name on the cover of this issue. They have seen and done a lot that most bands don't get the opportunity to, and I, as a fan of music, was quite excited to sit down and read the text when it came in. It's funny, because the other Big Rock story in this issue is on Iggy Pop — who did almost all of his great punk stuff on Columbia, another major. I guess that would make him, as well as us (*Hit List*) a bunch of sellouts as well. I guess you can throw

HIT SQUAD

this rag in the trash, go write your letter to *MRR* (are they still around?) and listen to your beloved DEAD BOYS, RAMONES, CLASH, and BLACK FLAG records. Oh, wait, those were all on (or at least distributed by) majors too!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, FROM GREEN DAY TO HARDCORE IN THE CLICK OF A CARRIAGE RETURN KEY!

The state of HC is good right now. It might be as strong as it's ever been. Some of the records that I have gotten over the last few months have blown my mind, and with the recent surge of great HC, I couldn't be happier to be a fan. My inspiration for these statements was flipping through my car CD holder the other day, so I'm going to flip through that with you. Obviously, I'll leave out stuff you should already know about, so don't think that those BLACK FLAG, KID DYNAMITE, Dischord-The Year In Singles, type CDs aren't in there — it's just that there's so much great *new* stuff to talk about.

For many reasons, but none more obvious than the fact that they are the most consistent, and currently my favorite HC label out there, I have been ordering all of the Bridge 9 Records releases. I received seven new ones this month, and only got one that I didn't fall madly in love with. I swear, this must be just like randomly ordering records from Revelation back in the day. I'm not even going to start up on AMERICAN NIGHTMARE, the first band that turned me on to B9, but if you don't like that band, you should just go cut your eardrums out and give them to a deaf person who might have some taste and could use them. Go buy everything they have ever done!!!

PANIC is a new band with Gibby from the TROUBLE (amazing punk/HC band a la MINOR THREAT that GMM records put out), and other original members of THE EXPLOSION and AMERICAN NIGHTMARE. Blowing through 7 songs in 8 minutes, this debut CD-EP/7" will leave you floored. Think NEGATIVE APPROACH waking up on the wrong side of the bed! CARRY ON also have a great new record. This is over-the-top heavy, fast, HC. Not only great songwriting, but also

incredible guitar work, which *really* give the record its balls. Plenty of chugga chugga parts for your dancin' needs. NO WARNING also just released a new CD, but of the EP type. All I can say is that if you miss early JUDGE, CRO-MAGS, etc..., go pick this up. And finally, THE HOPE CONSPIRACY. This band is amazing. To me, these guys fit in more with the punk arena, but the world swears they are HC. Two new songs, and the four tracks from their original Life records release, all remastered. The new songs consist of "Treason" by NAKED RAY-



PANIC: On the streets of London...panic on the streets of Birmingham...



INTERNATIONAL? MAYBE NOT. NOISY? YES! A CONSPIRACY? OF COURSE!: The Hope Conspiracy bring the HC to your house.

GUN and an original, which might be the best song I've heard in a long time. Think BLACK FLAG punk with the heaviness of HELMET (yes, I just said HELMET) but with balls-out HC style.

The limited 7" is just the latter 2 screamers, but the CD-EP includes all six tracks.

Equal Vision Records has been quite busy as well. The new CONVERGE record is amazing. Yeah, it's metal-math-hardcore, but it's the best execution of it out there. If you dig the DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN (who recently just got a new singer), CONVERGE is a *must* to check out. BANE also just cranked out another new full-length, which is by far

their best work to date. More melodic metallic crunch HC from these guys.

You might also want to check in on www.initialrecords.com over the next little while. They are releasing a couple of BLACK FLAG tribute 7"ers featuring PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS & HOPE CONSPIRACY. These are just teasers for the full length tribute album coming out later, featuring AMERICAN NIGHTMARE: "Depression", ANODYNE: "Life Of Pain", BURNT BY THE SUN: "Drinking And Driving", CONVERGE: "Loose Nut", THE DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN: "Damaged I", "Damaged II", THE HOPE CONSPIRACY: "Nervous Breakdown", OLD MAN GLOOM: "Slip It In", PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS: "Police Story", "Gimme Gimme Gimme" (12" only), "Wasted" (CD only). By the way, PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS rule. Think a heavy pissed off modern BLACK SABBATH. One of the best live bands I've seen in a while. Their new album is on No Idea!.

I'm going to wrap this up with two records that are at exact opposite ends of the HC spectrum. Sweden's DS-13 are the fucking kings. Dirty-ass old-school hardcore. Hell, it even comes packaged in Pushead artwork!! You can't help but to think of the first few Dischord singles when you listen to this. The recording is trashy, the bass is distorted as all hell, and the songs are fast and furious. What a great record. It's on Havoc Records, and I would wager that most fans of both punk and Hardcore would eat it up. At the other extreme is the brilliant sound of STRIKE ANYWHERE. Featuring Thomas from INQUISITION, STRIKE ANYWHERE have just released a great record called "Chorus Of One", on Jade Tree records. It's much in the vein of GOOD RIDDANCE or PROPAGANDHI (who by the way, are one of the best bands going. Make sure you have their new album, as well as all of their old stuff, including the "Where Quantity is Job 1" CD. What a brilliant fucking band!!), but with maybe more of a DAG NASTY approach. Huge production, huge guitars, and great songs. Hooks all over the place topped off with well-written social commentary. And finally, I'm sorry. I'm going back on my word regarding not talking about AMERICAN NIGHTMARE. They have single handedly re-inspired my musical drive. Check them out. They're on a tour with CONVERGE and HOPE CONSPIRACY this December. As I've said before, education is priceless, and buying a CD is so cheap — so get your ass to the record store! ⊕



CONVERGE

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 28-Nov Chicago, IL - Fireside
 29-Nov Minneapolis, MN - Whole Music Club
 30-Nov Omaha, NB - Cog Factory
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 2-Dec Jackson Hole, WY - The Hogs Den

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 7-Dec San Fran, CA - The Pound
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 9-Dec Los Angeles, CA - Troubador
 10-Dec Anaheim, CA - Chain Reaction
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 12-Dec Phoenix - Nile Basement
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 14-Dec Ft Collins, CO - Starlight Café
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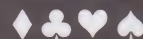
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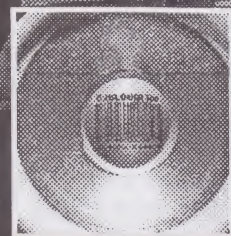
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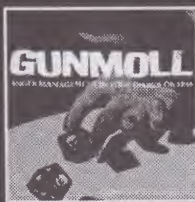
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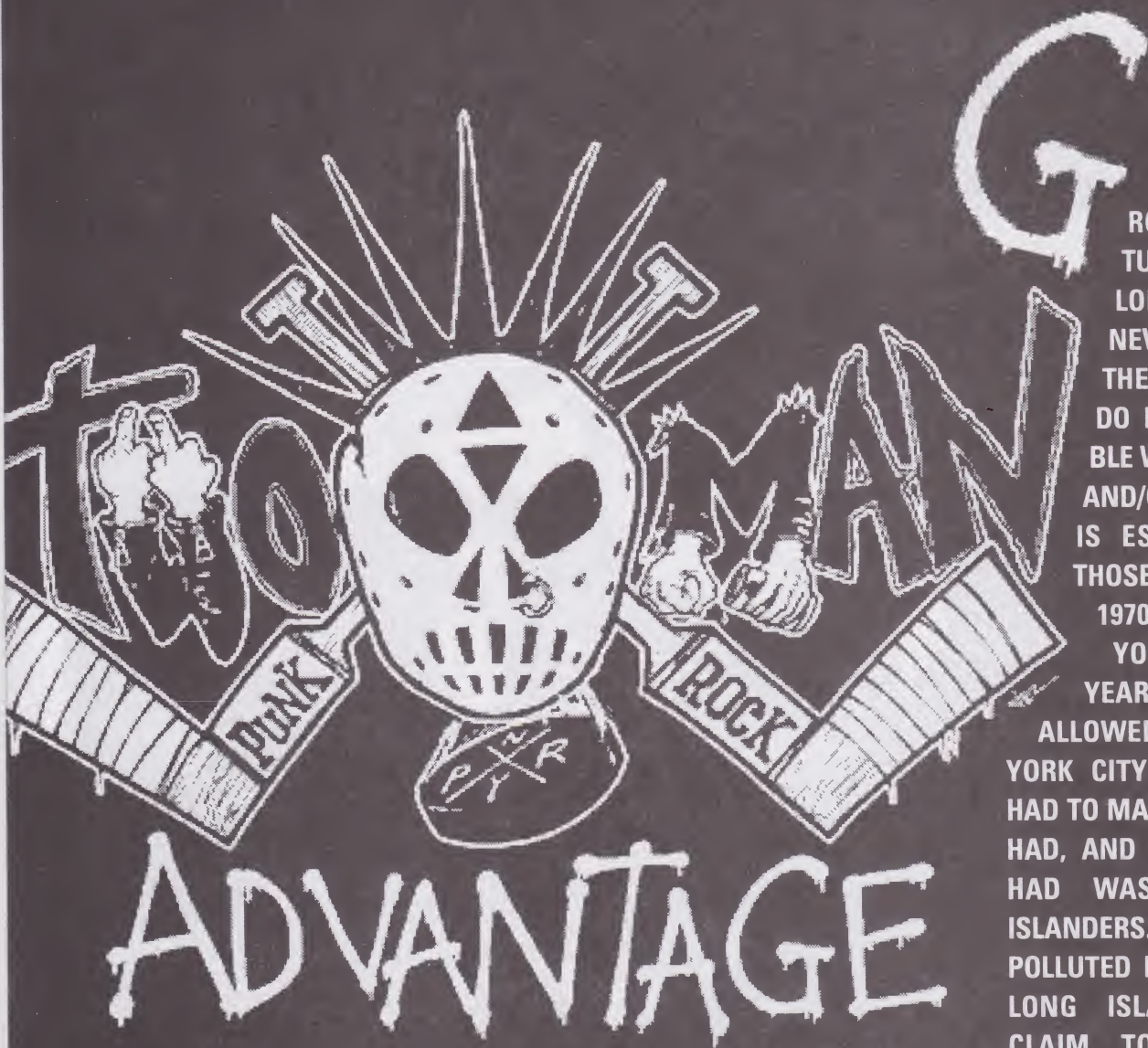
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G
ROWING UP IN THE CULTURAL WASTELAND OF LONG ISLAND IS AND NEVER WAS MUCH FUN. THERE WASN'T MUCH TO DO EXCEPT GET IN TROUBLE WITH DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND/OR VANDALISM. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR THOSE OF US BORN AROUND 1970. WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, SAY 10-11 YEARS OLD, WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO GO INTO NEW YORK CITY BY OURSELVES. WE HAD TO MAKE DO WITH WHAT WE HAD, AND THE ONLY THING WE HAD WAS THE NEW YORK ISLANDERS. HERE WE WERE, ON A POLLUTED PIECE OF DIRT CALLED LONG ISLAND, WHOSE ONLY CLAIM TO FAME WAS THE "AMITYVILLE HORROR." THEN, THE ISLANDERS AND HOCKEY PUT US ON THE MAP. ALL OF A SUDDEN, LONG ISLAND WAS A LITTLE COOLER. WE HAD HOMETOWN HEROS - CLARK GILLIES, BOBBY NYSTROM, MIKE BOSSY, BILLY SMITH - I COULD GO ON AND ON, BUT I'LL SPARE YOU. FOUR STANLEY CUPS LATER (COUNT 'EM, FOUR!), WE REALIZED THAT HOCKEY HAD CHANGED OUR LIVES. IT WAS ALSO AT THIS TIME THAT PEOPLE LIKE MYSELF AND THE FUTURE MEMBERS OF TWO MAN ADVANTAGE WERE ALSO EXPOSED TO PUNK AND HARDCORE.

As everyone knows, the inner city's greatest punk bands were all started by kids from the surrounding suburbs. So here were these misfits, a bunch of great friends who love hockey, punk rock and, of course, being from Wrong Island. They loved to drink and get drunk. Thus, the Two Man Advantage was born. Not just a band, but a team, a way of life. Not just a way out of the Island - it was too late for that. No, they wanted to make Long Islanders proud of their bastard offspring! With the Islanders in last place now, it was up to the Two Man Advantage to put Long Island back on the map. And that's what they're busy doing. And you thought hockey, beer, and punk rock could only go so far...As a fan of the Two Man, I have to say they are not only a great bunch of people who really love what they do, but also an amazing band. I know it's hard for you, beloved readers, to get a sense of how truly entertaining this band is through an interview alone. But trust me. I've seen them pretty much destroy every other band they've played with. Their over-the-top stage antics are combined with songs that you'll be singing out loud all the way home. I urge each and every one of you to go out and buy their new CD, "Don't Label Us" (Go-Kart Records), and see them when they hit your town. You won't be disappointed. I had the honor to speak with the Two Man's singer, Drunk Bastard, in lovely Greenpoint, Brooklyn. For the record, two six packs of 20 ounce Budweisers was consumed between the two of us in an hour and a half.

Barry London: The first and most important question is, why the obsession with hockey? There have been some other punk bands obsessed with hockey, but rarely with other sports. Why is the Two Man so into hockey?

Drunk Bastard: First of all, hockey is not a sport, it's a way of life - just like punk rock. Hockey is very similar to punk rock. Punk rock is fast, hockey is fast. Punk rock is in your face, hockey is in your face. Hockey players get paid the least amount of money professionally - just like punk rockers! And both of them are ridiculously dangerous professions. Hockey is the closest thing in the sports world to punk rock! We love all the other "hockey bands" out there. We loved Slapshot and we love the Hanson

Brothers and the Zambonis - anyone who loves the combination of punk rock and roll and hockey, we salute you!

BL: Speaking of the Zambonis and Hanson Brothers, would you like to take those guys on in a real street hockey match?

DB: Fuck, yeah! We'll take on anyone. We play against other bands and other punks we meet at shows, and we are proud to say we are undefeated. I don't know if these bands like the Zambonis or the Hanson Brothers are for real like us. Do they bring their hockey gear, including nets, to play hockey when they arrive in town? I don't think so! We bring all our gear to all our shows. You know the saying - "I went to a punk show and a hockey game broke out!" We'll take on any band or team that wants to play. We'll even take on Bad Religion, and those guys can really play. They can actually skate on ice - only Coach and myself can do that.

BL: I heard that you guys were undefeated and that you actually are the holders of some sort of street hockey Stanley Cup. Is that true?

DB: Yeah, we're the holders of the Henry Cup, which is awarded in New Haven Connecticut. Every time we go up there we defend our title, and we always come home with the cup. Like I said, we're undefeated.

BL: What do you think about the Tie Domi and Scott Niedermeyer situation? (Note: During the semi-finals of this years season, Domi sucker-punched Niedermeyer with 7 seconds left in the game for no apparent reason).

DB: I think that was a total cheap shot, but I'm all for it. Tie Domi is one of those players who is ready to explode at any time. He doesn't think, he just hits - he's the kind of guy that I'd want on my team. He deserved the suspension he received, since hockey's got a bad reputation because of incidents like that. Americans think it's too violent. But then, what do you expect? It's fuckin' hockey!

BL: Does that mean that people should expect violence at a Two Man Advantage show?

DB: Of course, it's fucking punk rock! (laughs) We love chaos and we totally support chaos! But no one coming to see us should expect to get hurt, since we don't try to hurt our fans. But I do carry a huge goalie stick, so sometimes things accidentally happen. (Note: At the last Two Man show at CBGB's in New York, Drunk Bastard dropped his stick up on the way to the stage and ended up giving a friend of his a cut that required 6 stitches when the stick hit his face.)

BL: What are your worst injuries from a hockey game?



DB: Two broken teeth, a torn rotator cuff, a broken hand, two dislocated knees, torn ligaments, and a broken ankle. That's pretty much it.

BL: What are the worst injuries you've suffered at punk rock shows?

DB: A busted nose, some cuts and scrapes, and a banged-up head. Some guy once tried to stab me with a razor blade. All in all, I've had much worse injuries from hockey.

BL: You guys are from the cultural wasteland of Long Island, NY. Growing up there myself, I found the general population to be quite hostile to anything new and different. How did you survive as a band out there?

DB: You know how we survived? When we play LI, the Long Island kids can see that we're 10-15 years older than they are, and I think that that gives them some hope.

We're someone that they can look up to. Most of the bands that play there consist of 15-20 year old kids, but then here comes the Two Man - the old guys - who walk into a place, destroy it, drink all the beer, and then leave. And this leaves the kids breathless. I think they like that. We eventually did take advantage of the best city in the world, NYC, and that also helped a lot.

BL: People outside of New York reading this magazine may think that NYC is a very tolerant place, especially for punk rock. But it really isn't. There's a snotty vibe that runs through the NYC punk scene that is somewhat serious. I'd think that it would be hard for a band that plays songs about hockey and beer, and who are all decked out in hockey gear, to get any respect. What has the response been like there?

DB: I think we get as much respect as the

New York Islanders, which is none, but we don't really give a rat's ass. The problem with New York is that there are so many people there who aren't originally from NY but feel that they have to display some sort of tough guy image and attitude. But once they see the Two Man play and acknowledge that they are having fun, they warm up to us. They realize that they could be having a good time, too, instead of looking all cool and jaded and bored. That's what punk is all about - breaking down the barriers between who is cool and who is not. Punk rock was never cool. People have always gotten harassed and beaten up for being punks.

BL: You're known for having an outrageous live show. You yourself usually take off your shirt during the set. You've described yourself as "fat and hairy," and I find it quite refreshing that someone who doesn't have the perfect body doesn't really give a shit.

DB: If I go the beach, I could very well get laughed at. But when I play a punk show, such things really shouldn't matter. Punk rockers shouldn't stereotype people based on the way they look. If people in the audience laugh and point at me, I know that they're posers. We're probably the ugliest band in America, which is why we wear the hockey masks - to save people from the trauma of looking at our mugs for 35 minutes while we're on stage.

BL: Two Man Advantage isn't just about the music. You guys have three extra people in the band who don't even play an instrument. Who are they, and what do they do?

DB: Two Man is a team, not a band, O.K.? If anyone wants to be on the Two Man team, they should let me know. We always need new people on the team because someone is always getting hurt. We need second- and third-string players all the time. Two Man is really a collection of people who do different things. Even if you don't play an instrument, there's always something that you can contribute to the team. Let's take the rookie, for instance. A young kid comes up to me and says "hey, I want to be in Two Man." I say, "Can you drive?" The next thing you know, he's our personal driver/roadie. Metal Myk was pissed off that I took two ex-members from

"TWO MAN IS A TEAM, NOT A BAND, O.K.? IF ANYONE WANTS TO BE ON THE TWO MAN TEAM, THEY SHOULD LET ME KNOW."



his band, so I let him do backing vocals. Coach saw us play our first show, and just weaseled his way in. He adds spiritual and emotional support by preparing us psychologically for each game. At the moment we're looking for a water boy and/or beer boy. And a hot masseuse, preferably female, who is into back hair.

BL: O.K., here's the obligatory 1984-era question. It's a well-known fact that when punk and/or hardcore bands go on tour, they occasionally run into some trouble with racist punks and skins who come down to the show to fight and cause trouble. Your drummer, Amstel Fuhr, is black. Have you had any problems on the road because of his race?

DB: Amstel's black? No! Someone did say recently that our drummer was black, but I don't believe 'em. Basically, we have a black guy, a Mexican, two Jews, and some "I"-talians. We've had no problems with "Nazis" on the road - only in Suffolk county on Long Island. Those bullies are happiest when they can pick on one or two isolated people, but when we travel, there are seven or eight of us. So far, we've been lucky and not run into any of them. It's always a problem, though, when you travel with your teammates and find out that they may not be accepted because of their race. Coach actually knows a lot about militias and the Klan, since that's what he studies. So he knows how they operate and he knows how they work. Once he tried to run over a Nazi with his car!

BL: I've notice that your band members are very touchy-feely with each other. Would you say that you are a gay-positive band?

DB: None of us are gay right now, though one of us might end up that way. No, it's just that I believe that a team needs to be close and on the same level in order to play better. And we truly do love each other more than anything else. Beyond that, we are completely gay-positive. If you're a homosexual, go for it. You have the Two Man's support. We aren't called Two Man Advantage for nothing! (laughs)

BL: I hear that there is a film being is being made about you guys at this very moment. Do you want to elabo-

rate on that?

DB: Yes, it's true. There's a film maker from NY named Mark Foster. He decided to do a documentary/film on the Two Man because he was so intrigued that here was this band - a bunch of average guys who don't even try to get signed (twice!) - yet everything seems to fall into their laps in a left-handed sort of way. The film is finished even as we speak. Mark feels that we are all interesting individuals, as well as a good team. By the way, the film is called "69 Minutes Of Fame."

BL: Most bands that put on a wild show have tons of stories about the road. What's the absolutely craziest thing that's ever happened to you on tour?

DB: I don't know if it was the skinheads who wanted to be in our gang, the Denim Demons (an obvious Turbonegro reference), or what happened when we were in Laramie, Wyoming. We had just been cut off by a tractor trailer in a snowstorm, and our van and trailer had been pushed into a ditch in the middle of the highway. We were trying to push the van and trailer out of the ditch, when a helpful person in a small pickup truck came by and got us out of the ditch and back onto the highway. We wanted to pay him, but he said "No, you're in a band, and I want you to tell the world that people in Laramie, Wyoming are not bad people." As he said this, he pointed to a spot by the fence where a gay man had recently been beaten to death and left to die. This was a pretty high-profile story at the time, so we - being that we're sort of gay (see above response) - were pretty touched. We got back in the van, but had a back tire blown out on our trailer. The next town was just a few miles away, and there was a sign that said "Population: 1." We pulled up to the only building in the whole town, which was a gas station/restaurant/post office/bank/whatever. Skate went in to call home and found out that his grandfather was dying. So he had to go home right away, bringing the tour to a sudden end. That was pretty memorable: first we almost died in a car wreck, and then Skate's grandfather turned out to be really dying. I hope you weren't lookin' for a sex and drugs story. That's not really crazy stuff, since it happens everyday!

TWO MAN ADVANTAGE



DON'T LABEL US

BL: What can we look forward to from the Two Man Advantage in the near future?

DB: Well, we have a new record entitled "Don't Label Us" out on Go-Kart Records. Expect some non-stop touring after the record is released, as well as a hell of a good show and a lot of drinkin'. We're starting a full U.S. tour in June, which will last about five or six weeks. We're booking our own tour, which is never easy (as any band can tell you), but since we signed to Go-Kart it's been much easier. People have been a lot more responsive than they were in the past. Our first CD, "Drafted," was put out on a label called Royalty, which also put out the first REO Speeddealer recording. Just as we thought things were going our way with a record deal, Royalty went out of business a few months after our CD came out. That's the luck of the Two Man!

BL: Let's hope that doesn't happen with your new deal!

DB: Yeah, let's hope not. I think Greg at Go-Kart can keep his shit together. Right now everything seems fine, but he has yet to deal full on with the Two Man.

BL: One final question: what do you suggest that people go and do when the hockey season is over and the Two Man isn't playing in their town?

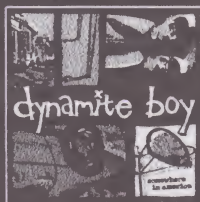
DB: If you're finally fed up sitting at home and listening to Turbonegro's "Apocalypse Dudes" LP, go out and see the following bands: Sick On The Bus, the Black Halos, Gluecifer, and the Zodiac Killers. But if you want to relax, smoke a joint and go see the Slackers. +

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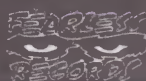


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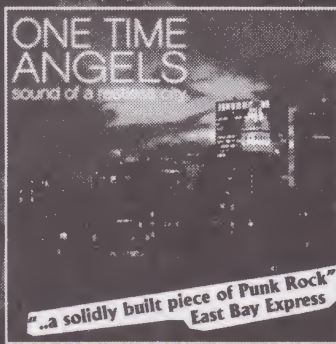
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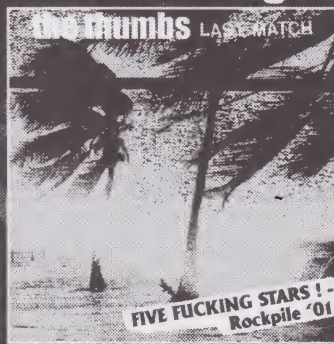
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HIT SQUAD

MY FORMER DAYS AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, THE "WHERE WAS I" QUESTION, AND A SHORT LOVE LETTER TO NEW YORKERS FOR THEIR RESILIENCE UNDER DURESS

From 1981 to 1983, I worked in the World Trade Center in the mailroom/services department of Prudential Lines, Inc., a now-defunct shipping firm on the 37th floor of the north tower. Every day I walked the mile from the apartment I still inhabit, amazed yet again by the gargantuan height of the twin spires as I, ant-like, entered the barren foun-

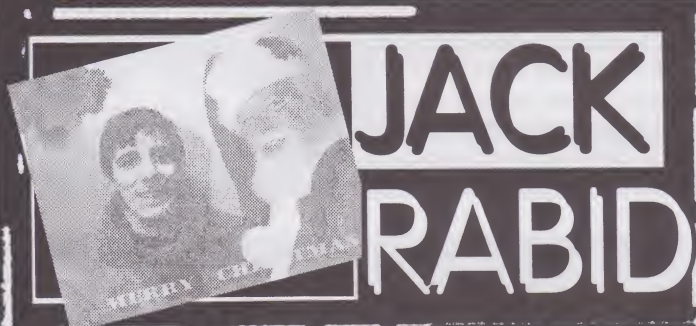
ever be fought, and often felt fortunate that I was "only" on the 37th floor. Hell, even from that vantage point, only a third of the way up, I could see all of Manhattan and 15-20 miles into Long Island and New Jersey, all the way to the (Overlook) hospital I was born in, in the town of my youth, Summit. When I was up on the 110th floor I felt like I had felt staring out from the ledge of the Grand Canyon in 1975. It was the sensation of being lost in perilous height.

I knew the buildings were safe, as I'd read about their engineering, right down to the constant built in sway. Yet somehow, I always felt a tad uneasy. Part of it was that I had seen "The Towering Inferno" (1974), but mostly it felt like climbing Pike's Peak, as I had done in a tourist cable car with my family as a little boy. It was the way your stomach would turn over every time the elevator would whisk you so damn far so damn fast. Or how tiny the long ships looked in the Hudson river, or the miniature Statue of Liberty hanging out on that little island down there in the twinkling harbor. Most of all, I remember how it felt to let myself in with my key on a Saturday, using the company typewriters and massive Xerox 9200 to make issues 8 through 13 of the embryonic *Big Takeover*. As I sat there typing, shooting down text and photos on the 9200, then cutting, pasting, taping, and running off copies, there was total silence on the floor. All I could hear for the eight or nine hours I worked was the constant, light but distinct "wrrreeeeecchhhh" sound of the building's constant motion from side to side, like the sound of a ship mast creaking on a granite sea. For the last 20 years, whenever someone asked me what it was like to work there, I mentioned how much that sound would creep me out on a Saturday, even while realizing that I was in no danger. I remember being glad when I left the company in April 1983, knowing I would probably forever work a lot closer to mother earth, and not in a place so high beyond all reason.

As it happens, a few years later my parents and a few friends of theirs were obliged to walk out on a \$600 check at Windows on the World, when a fire broke out in the restaurant as they were eating their deserts, and the upper floors had to be evacuated immediately. They recounted the long climb downwards on those stairs, down, down, and down some more, round and around and around. (My father and I also discussed how difficult it would be to fight a more substantial fire or accident.) I later sat in rapt attention as my close friend Tony Pernice described the half-hour it took him, moving slowly down 60 floors in dark congestion, when the complex's basement car park was bombed. Again, I felt glad that I no longer worked there. Not only was it vulnerable to an uncontrollable fire in the wrong spot or a natural disaster (the possibility of devastating earthquake here, for example, is remote but not at all impossible), but now it had also proved to be a terrorist target. "Bad," I thought. "I wouldn't ever work there again, that's for sure."

How horrible to think now that one of those scenarios has felled not one, but both, of these monstrosities, like giants being cut down by insects. Just the thought of being in either of those buildings I knew so well as they went down makes me shudder in the memory of my old, irrational (or so I thought) fears.

On the morning of September 11, I was awoken at 9:15 A.M., 12 minutes after the second plane's collision, by WOXY in Cincinnati. I do a radio interview with morning host Steve Baker every other Tuesday at that time, so his call was neither unexpected nor the cause of any alarm. It was he who informed my



JACK RABID

tain plaza on my way to work. I confess I did consider them ugly, antiseptically stuffy buildings, all steel and glass and no soul. Yet they were still impressive and a little bit scary when one beheld them from their bases, looking up forever. I was a bit of a go-fer, which meant that I was all over the towers on any given day. A few times a month I would even go all the way to the top of my tower, to the outrageously expensive Windows of the World restaurant, to fetch a fancy feast for the company's filthy-rich owner, Spiros Scorous. I went up and down the dozens of elevators of both buildings, running errands, making purchases, dropping off the company rent check. I often eschewed the elevators for the various endless stairwells, as they were often the fastest and easiest way to get from one floor to another. (For instance, to get from floor 42 to 46 by elevator meant having to go from 42 all the way to the ground floor, changing to a separate bank of express elevators to the floor 44 skylobby, and then changing for another bank of local elevators to finally arrive at 46!).

Through it all, I gained a lasting memory of those lonely, dark, endless concrete-block stairways that would play such a large role in the lives and deaths of thousands of human beings, and I also remember they reinforced my constant perception that these buildings were just absurdly, dangerously tall. What do you suppose went through my teenage mind during the fire drills, as I streamed down these stairs for a whole 10 minutes to the safety of the plaza? I tried to imagine how any such fire could

fiancée Mary and I that he'd "just heard that a plane had hit the World Trade Center." Both Mary and I simultaneously imagined a Cessna or Piper Cub, but as I began my music chat with Steve, Mary turned on CNN on the bedroom TV. As the images greeted us, I expressed my startled surprise live on air. I knew at once from my experience there that at least a few thousand people were trapped. As I recounted my former employment there for the listening audience, I pointed out my old 37th floor haunts to Mary, and told Steve how many people had worked with me there (I'd sorted Prudential Lines' mail, so I'd been privy to the precise number.), as well as the number on Tony's 60th floor the half-dozen times I'd visited him there. Doing the math, that was 20-30 floors times 200-300 people. I voiced these fears, perhaps not yet grasped by others, that I estimated around 4,000-9,000 people on the floors on or above the terrible flaming, smoking holes. I described for the Ohioans the banks of stairwells, and their locations interspersed around the floors of each building, and how with so much smoke it was very possible that these stairs would be impassable. I had a sick feeling as I said these things, even as the conversation turned to my actual duty as a music commentator for a music station. We'd agreed the night before to play the Damned's ominous 1979 "Machine Gun Etiquette" gothic masterpiece, "Plan Nine Channel Seven," including the main chorus lyric, "Too close but too world's away." The things I'd just said filled me with foreboding, as the song's words now seemed so prophetic.

I hung up and continued staring at the TV. We couldn't see the buildings from our window, although we could have from the roof or the corner. But I didn't want to leave the house, as I wanted an explanation for this unbelievable picture. And I kept thinking of Tony, wondering if he was in the stairs at that moment (yes, as it turned out). It all just seemed so unbelievable, as if I were still asleep, caught in a nightmare from my past. My last words to Steve Baker had been my conviction that terrorism was the cause. Not only had the complex been targeted before, but CNN had said two planes were involved (no footage of the collisions had yet aired). "One," I said, "could be an accident, but two could only be deliberate." The clear realization of a terrorist strike also made me want to stay by the TV for information, instead of going out and watching the fire. The news of the Pentagon strike, another plane crashing in Pennsylvania, the (as it turns out erroneous) news of a car bomb explosion outside the State Department in Foggy Bottom, the immediate grounding of all air traffic nationwide, and the on-the-double evacuation of government personnel in Washington came so fast and furious that we needed to keep informed in order to make a decision about what to do ourselves, even as we reacted to each shocking bit of news. Should we ourselves stay, or like Washington, run for our lives?

So the screams of our neighbors on my roof and those watching nearby came as a big surprise. They were seeing live what

JACKRABID

So the screams of our neighbors on my roof and those watching nearby came as a big surprise. They were seeing live what wasn't clear on my TV screen yet...

wasn't clear on my TV screen yet, that the first building had gone down. Confused, I was concerned that they had seen something close by, until we came to understand that building two had amazingly come crashing down only a mile away. I heard and felt the second one, my old north tower, do likewise soon thereafter, a distinct rumble like approaching thunder and lightning, and an earth tremor like the one felt every time the F train passes three stories below us. Again I shuddered as I contemplated the math I had done for WOXY, and thought again of Tony (he was several blocks away by then, fortunately), of the eyewitness accounts of the people jumping, and of all my fellow New Yorkers who must have just perished right there before me on the screen. They weren't saying those things on the TV, but I just knew. It was like I was back there again, a green 19-year-old go-

fer punk wandering amongst the throngs of humanity on each floor, floors that just weren't there any more.

What to do now? Panic gripped the entire area. How many more attacks would there be, and what form would they take? Clearly, standing in the doorway, like one does for an earthquake, would not work. So we prepared to evacuate our besieged island. I left a message on our answering machine with the time and state of our personal health at that moment, and added, "if there are no more terrorist attacks, we are fine." But where, we wondered, could one go? The subways and the commuter railroads were mostly shut down, as were

the bridges (at least to automobiles). There was no way to leave except to walk over long, exposed, terrorist-inviting bridges. We were stuck. Manhattan had in fact gone into total lockdown/shutdown like I'd never seen. We'd viewed the TV images of our fellow inhabitants streaming across the Brooklyn Bridge, but I preferred to stay put. Until there was more info or some indication of where to go, Houston Street was best for now. We live in a valley of sorts, building wise, between all the Financial district skyscrapers a mile south, with the Towers that had just gone down, and the midtown Empire State Building/Chrysler Building group. Our coordinates seemed an unlikely terrorist target if more was to follow—far less, at any rate, than those bridges teeming with their fleeing humanity. So we sat and awaited the arrival of Mary's first cousin Conrad, himself fleeing that suddenly risky midtown area.

The phones were working, if poorly, so we managed to reach a few parents and family members (all of whom said it was impossible to get through to us, as all circuits into New York were understandably jammed). Best of all, Tony's wife was at home. Completely shaken, she nevertheless told me that Tony had called on a friend's cell phone to tell her he'd gotten out, and

HIT SQUAD

she told me the whole story of his panicked ordeal getting down the 60 stories and out of there, with only 20 minutes to spare. Whew...I next reached my good pal John Gura, who works (worked) across Church Street in a building that was reported demolished. Fortunately, he said he'd gone to vote in the New York City mayoral primary that morning, and was thus still in transit to his job for a rare late arrival. Whew...He also told me our mutual friend Dave Rawson, a lawyer down there, himself kept a start time after the 8:45-9:03 disasters. Finally assured that my friends in greatest jeopardy were in fact alive, we headed out the door for St. Vincent's hospital on 12th Street and 7th Avenue to give blood, a suggestion of Mayor Guliani's that we'd heard on TV. (The lines were so long with like-minded New Yorkers that we were told to come back at midnight.) Looking south from Second Avenue and Houston, I finally saw for myself the massive column of thick, black smoke billowing up wards and then towards Brooklyn with the Easterly wind, in the very spot where those two giants had always been. It's a sight I won't forget. We went to visit our dear friend Lynette Huang here in the East Village, gathering, tribe-like, with our nearby neighbors, and she kindly fed us. The sirens were everywhere, blaring from all directions like an avant garde music wail of modern-art apprehension, dread, and doom. (They accompanied the Tim Burtonesque postmodern architecture of the twisted mounds of rubble at Ground Zero I later witnessed from lower

Broadway-an awesome, gruesome sight of far greater scale than the images on TV.)

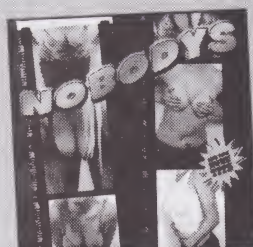
When we returned home the police barricades had appeared along the entire length of our Houston street, with five cops and a squad car parked on each corner blocking all traffic, human or otherwise. We were obliged to show our IDs to get to our building. And we could see the F14s flying overhead, and military helicopters hovering and circling. We started to guess that the attacks were likely over-they certainly could no longer succeed from the air, with all flights grounded, and thus all non-military flights suspicious and treated as hostile-and started to exhale, but the shock remained. No one on the streets was speaking, as if New York had lost its collective voice.

For the next three days the barricades stood, like in Belfast or Jerusalem or Beirut, as the fighter planes buzzed ominously overhead. But with every extra hour that passed, with only bomb scares instead of disasters (including two that shut down Penn Station and the Empire State Building, briefly preventing my old friend and ex-roommate Eddie Marshall from getting to us, since the reopened subways were shut down again), New Yorkers finally began to breathe again. The streets around us, open solely to emergency vehicles which were now going to and fro only intermittently, were bizarrely deserted. Going to bed the very first night, it seemed so odd that there was no hint of noise, not a single car, truck or bus rumbling by on our busy six-lane road. It was as hushed as Kansas or Montana. It was like sound itself had been evacuated on those bridges, too.

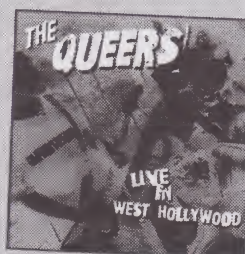
I've never seen New York's Lower East Side more inert and silent than it was in those three days, as scores of pedestrians



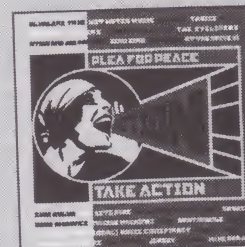
HOPELESS & SUB CITY



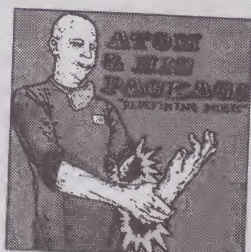
NOBODY'S COMING: 11/27/01
LESS HTS... / HR659-CD



THE QUEERS
LIVE IN WEST HOLLYWOOD / HR658-CD



PLEA FOR PEACE TAKE ACTION
SC020-BUDGET CD



ATOM & HIS PACKAGE
REDEFINING MUSIC / HR653-LP/CD



SCARED OF CHAKA
CROSSING WITH... / HR655-CD/LP



AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY
24 HOUR ROADSIDE... / HR642-CD/LP



THRICE
IDENTITY CRISIS / SC019-CD

and the occasional bicyclist wandered aimlessly among the streets, like *Blade Runner* without the rain. Food stores and restaurants were the only businesses open, but they had to do without any deliveries, as cars and trucks were not allowed to get to them. That also meant no newspapers. The second night we tried supporting local outdoor cafes, suffering from the barricades that excluded non-residents, but found the wind had shifted northward. The thick, acrid, black, and utterly oppressive smoke from the still-burning WTC fires was now our guest, as all of lower Manhattan was enshrouded in its sooty fog. A third of the locals passing by were wearing surgical masks. Everyone looked sad and stricken, no one laughed at anything, no one spoke loudly, and a TV set showing CNN propped up on a chair in the middle of a Second Avenue sidewalk drew a vacantly-staring, wordless crowd.

When the barricades came down North of Canal Street on Sept. 14th, Eddie, Mary, Conrad, and I decided to go to Little Italy, just north of Canal, to try to spread some money to the businesses suffering down there. At 8 P.M. on a Friday, prime time on a gorgeous weekend night (save for the ever-present, wafting smoke), only four of the 60 Italian restaurants in the district were open, and none of these were full. Absolutely nothing was the same.

Unable to write or work on my magazine (what was the point, in those grim days?), I answered 286 emails (according to the counter) and dozens of incoming calls inquiring about my/our health and well-being (pretty much everyone that I'd ever met once or even had a passing dealing with). It was rather touching, and if you lived anywhere within 20 miles of here, it was the same. Over and over, I cut and pasted a response that we were OK, and added a little of the above recounting of my calculations of the number of deaths I feared. No one seemed as yet prepared for loss numbers quite that large.

Despite all these efforts to assure those who kindly cared about us, I soon discovered that I had, for the third time in my life, "died." Someone unable to reach me got scared and started asking around the internet, and someone else in his group mentioned that they thought I used to work there, and pretty soon I still worked there, and in fact I was "missing" along with the thousands who truly were. Queries were even posted on our own *Big Takeover* email list. Two colleagues who had my number and were local and thus able to get through, Ira Robbins and Michael Azzerad, called to make sure it wasn't in fact true. A few days later, I introduced myself to Ken Stringfellow (an ex-husband of a friend, and someone I'd often written about in the past) after his remarkable solo concert at Mercury Lounge, and he ignored my outstretched hand and hugged me instead, saying "You're alive!" I said, "You heard I was dead, too??" And he replied, "Well, unaccounted for." It was all truly surreal.

All this aside, though, one just couldn't escape the constant reminders of suffering, tragedy, death, and destruction. There were the firehouses with the candles and haunting photos of the

lost, and the hand-scrawled thank-you posters from school children. Fliers for the missing, young, smiling, happy and good looking people were plastered on all the construction fences, covering up the usual gig flyers and movie posters. There were the MASH units hurriedly set up on the sidewalks of hospitals to receive wounded people that never came. And everywhere that thick smoke, and with it the smell of our fallen giants, and quite possibly of our fellow citizens, was so much to bear. It sobered us on the Brooklyn softball field that Sunday, as we all struggled to return to our normal routines five days later, but realized there was no real diversion. One heard of the friends of friends now perished (or of the aforementioned John's first cousin, so sorry, John), and I was further amazed to see "60 Minutes" turn up at my old Summit train station, showing the cars never picked up

by the missing commuters. The list of Summit-ites circulated on the net, and my brother Steve told me that he'd lost an old buddy, his Summit soccer teammate. Tony spoke of a few building colleagues he'd once introduced me to, music fans, as well as staffers he'd greeted everyday, who were now gone. Everyone knew someone.

Even the mayor, transferred overnight from pathetic resident crank (the assault on music nightlife, the inane "decency panel," the public spat with his spurned wife) to incredibly effective crisis czar, seemed genuinely staggered, totally humbled by his own losses in the upper echelons of the fire and emergency depart-

ments. Death...it just popped up from every corner, from every inanimate object, from the lips of every human, from every molecule of dirty/beautiful air, even.

The rest you know, of course. The love of the rest of America, so long marred by prejudice, ignorance, jealousy, and irrational fear (and partly by our own occasional arrogance and financial greed) was pouring in our direction like we'd never seen. Suffice it to say, that too has been surreal. For by now, all truly grasp the hit New York took, not just us New Yorkers. 5000 human beings is a lot of working people not to come home one night. Untold grief, multiplied by all who love and depend on them. Thousands more thankfully were still alive, saved, but out of work. The WTC mall and two hotels were crushed, and with it all the service industry jobs the less financially secure folks counted on, from the Borders superstore and the soup-not-so-nazi, to the Sbarro and the Krispy Kreme, all snuffed out. The restaurant business south of Canal was, at least temporarily, obliterated (Even in Chinatown, the cooks and waiters were reduced to bringing hot meals to ground zero workers.) The tourism trade, and all that relies on it, screeched to a near-halt. And so on.

That's the present. What I hope I recall most, years from now, is what us locals have always known, and what the rest of the

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HIT SQUAD

country never really guessed at. We Big Applers are a tough town full of tough people, filled with non-quitting, highly resilient, hard-working people who know the "If I can make it there" Sinatra-song lyric by heart. Not that other American city dwellers aren't, but we have a little farther to go to just plain live, let alone prosper here, even in more peaceful circumstances. Perhaps we're more used to minor collective hardships than most. Even other U.S. metropolises that approach our eight million people and diversity, places like Chicago, L.A., and San Francisco, can't quite match what separates New Yorkers from other urban environments (we're not better, only different). Even Chi-town, which battles worse weather, and also boasts a tough-as-nails working class populace, wonders how we put up with our defining characteristic, our outrageous density per square foot.

We spend so much time crushed in together, in the subways and buses primarily, but also in our tiny apartments, walk-in-closet restaurants and hole-in-the-wall bars, where every inch seems accounted for and used. Unlike the American West, the vast majority disdain the private automobile as a total impracticality for our means of movement. We are just plain more used to having to accommodate each other personally here, as crushed in, packed-together strangers without the luxury of plentiful personal space—all in order to get the good stuff, the equally tremendous daily life this place oozes with every day like a toothpaste tube oozes with paste.

I certainly won't wax about how friendly we are, or even how friendly we aren't. We're far too diverse to characterize either way. But I can tell you this: No city in this nation is more used to kibitzing with its neighbors of all sexes, races, ethnic origins, or religions. Packed into all the elevators, subway cars, buses, music joints, coffee bars, rehearsal complexes, and sidewalks, taxi lines, open air markets, sporting events, and tiny-by-comparison not-so-"super" markets, we are just always in each other's faces all the time, every day. Thus, we naturally feel less detached from everyone else's realities. If our threatened populace streamed down those doomed staircases and over the bridges in an orderly fashion, to the surprised eyes of the greater nation, it didn't surprise any of us. Likewise, we aren't shocked by our "heroes," those brave citizens who rushed into those buildings, because to be a police officer or fireperson in this town has always been to put your life truly on the line, given the realities of our tall buildings (and of the historical criminal element). The mayor called them "well-trained." If so, it was in the art of shrugging off those constant risks, and doing their (in this case) horrible duty. Bless them forever.

In sum, we have all been through so much that we've always come to believe we can get through anything. In this case, we

finally needed the help of the rest of our country to repair the damage done to us from without. But our attitude remains defiant in the face of disaster. Going back even before my own arrival as a permanent resident, we have survived blackouts, city bankruptcy, terrible blizzards, infamous serial killers, subway collisions, wilding, cruel hoaxes, Robert Chambers, the Triangle Shirtwaist fire, Civil War draft riots, British occupation in the Revolutionary War, a thankfully declining but once heinous crime rate (it seemed as if every car radio was besieged, let alone all the more violent atrocities), the murder of John Lennon, financial district economy havoc, Boss Tweed, mafia extortions and misery (we were even the breeding ground of the young Al Capone), sweat shop slums (still being uncovered), illegal immigrant slave labor, drug rubouts, gang warfare, a previous terrorist bombing (and the nervousness of hosting its trial), a West Nile Virus scare, a 14th street flood, a Park Slope air-

plane crash, Lou Gehrig's shocking disease, the loss of two beloved baseball teams, a savage AIDS epidemic, constant U.N. controversy, sudden building collapses, the Koch-era corruption scandals, and even an ugly race riot in Crown Heights. We are a land of sirens at any time.

We survive all of this because, frankly, we love this place—sensibly or otherwise, rightly or wrongly—and all the great things that can only happen in such a global city of such magnitude. We therefore feel like we will get through this latest thing, too, given a fair chance. Now this capacity to endure all blows has been severely tested. Not only from

the recent loss and upheaval, but from the knowledge that we remain a possible target for more, at any time, on any day. Yet, so far there hasn't been the slightest hint of any mass exodus from our city limits, of all the New Yorkers leaving for "safer" places. If you come here, you don't see people giving up at the first catastrophe, however sad and shocking it is.

Instead we do the opposite, and we go about our lives as ever, while keeping our fallen friends and associates in mind. We beg and beseech you all to come here and see for yourselves, and help us revive our economy. Come here and join us, and see our usual defiance in the face of harsh reality, our typical resolve to keep chasing the New York cultural explosion. In a state of alert, with our slightly wounded pride and sadness, you might see us at our best. For as I look around, even those of us who were thrown out of work by the recession or the recent tragedy are mostly staying put for now, searching for new employment here, stubborn and unrelenting as ever, and as determined as ever to remain New Yorkers, no matter what evil men with diseased minds corrupted by their intolerant religious views throw our way. For it is our very tolerance, not only of our lives here but of each other and all our wild differences, that makes us New Yorkers most of all. ☪

To check out Jack's magazine 20-year-old magazine, The Big Takeover, have a look at the web site at www.bigtakeover.com. Sample issues are only \$5 and subscriptions are only \$20 for four issues.)

Now this capacity to endure all blows has been severely tested. Not only from the recent loss and upheaval, but from the knowledge that we remain a possible target for more, at any time, on any day.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE TO SINCERELY EXPRESS MY DEEPEST SYMPATHIES TO BROTHER MICHAEL MONROE FOR THE SAD & UNEXPECTED LOSS OF HIS BELOVED WIFE, JUDE WILDER.

R.I.P. Chet Atkins, John Lee Hooker, Jude Wilder, Jerry Wick, Papa John Phillips, Douglas Adams, Bryan Gregory, and my dear friends Jonna, and Jen.

"Art Is A Revolt Against Fate..." (-Andre Malraux)

"We Don't Care About Employment...We Don't Care About The Law..." (-Paul K.)

"The Only True Aging Is The Erosion Of One's Ideals..." (-Ralph Nader)

"A Puppet I Was Never Meant To Be, In Style Or Not..." (-Hello Disaster)

I STILL LOVE ROCK'N'ROLL...

The new IAN HUNTER album, "Rant", is the absolute best new record I've heard since the Teenage Frames, and it sits nicely alongside his best work with Mott the Hoople! Wait 'til you hear it! WOW!!!

IS NOTHING SACRED?

Contrary to widespread speculation, I AM NOT THE NEW VOCALIST FOR THE RESURRECTED LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH.

Excited as I was to learn that one of rock's rockin'est rockers, Mister Brian James, had resurfaced recently and was working with Brother Wayne Kramer in an all-star super group called Mad For The Racket (to be released on Muscletone Records in the U.S. this fall.), as well as jamming with raw-outlaw-blues-punk-junk-storytellers the Hangmen, I must admit that I was taken aback by the news I read on some Stiv Bators chat-thing I subscribe to that Brian and Tregunna have reconvened as the LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH! Like you, I was initially shocked and dismayed, until I read the rap on their website about how the Lords were all of us who've opened our eyes "when the heroes have all died away", and remembered how the Lords' message was always about free will. And once I started thinking about it, and listened to their first album for the first time in ages, I started really warming up to the idea of James trying to summon up some of that long lost fire. I mean, why the hell not? Brian and Dave ARE Lords, after all. And the song goes "JOIN the Lords of the New Church/BE a Lord of the New Church", right?

It's just kinda like the DOORS without Jim Morrison.

Unlike some, I love Brian James' solo album — especially "Ain't That A Shame", "Polka Dot Shot", and "Prime Time Blues",

and really even actually sort of almost liked Brian's last group, the Dripping Lips (have you heard their lovely song, "Such A Lot Of Stars"?). Of course, I was always thinkin' 'bout how much harder they'd have rocked if I had been the singer, but now I just pity the fool who's brave enough to step up to the mic as a fill-in for "thee" Lord. As Cheetah likes to say, "A lotta guys try to fill ol' Bators' shoes, but they only made one pair." So I dunno, I gotta lotta mixed emotions about this, but ultimately, I suppose Brian feels he has the right to reinvoké the



brand-name, seeing as how the Misfits seem to be making a living milking the past without Glenn Danzig somehow, even though I don't buy their records. And fuck — let's all try and remember that our beloved scoundrel STIV was no saint, either! I mean, this really ain't that much different from STIV trying to cash-in, touring as the DEAD BOYS, without the other guys, is it? Or even real cool Jimmy Zero demos getting released as new Dead Boys product that neither Stiv nor Cheetah seem to have really participated much in. Whoever the new mystery vocalist is, I take my hat off to him for dumb-guts alone, 'cause no matter how good he might be, the elder members of this faithful congregation are gonna eat him alive. The only guy I think we'd mostly all accept would probably have to be Michael Monroe — or like, Iggy...Remember how Jim from THEE HYPNOTICS turned the other Lords down when Stiv had back problems and they advertised for a replacement before, and then ended up getting sacked by Stiv onstage?

Seemingly everything else has already been sucked dry, watered down, stripped of all its core integrity and commodified. Right now, I'm working for this Faustian corporate chain, Urban Outfitters, where all of the styles of clothing and accessories that some of us got beat up for wearing sixteen years ago have been reproduced and saturation-marketed and tranquilized and tamed and overpriced for mass-consumption, it's actually quite vulgar. The kids all look the same. They sell all this marked-up punk gear to gullible young consumers and make like it's a hip and desirable, even prestigious, job to work there because, well, they blast the Black Halos and Candy Snatchers in the store, but are actually just another greedy, typically profit-drunk, sham corporation that body-searches employees before they're allowed to leave the store. No shit — we're expected to lift up our pants legs and pull all our pockets inside out: "I'm not stealing a pink plastic flamingo, I'm just happy to see yas..." They even have the nerve to call this ritual "the Urban Dance", and their humourless

HIT SQUAD

but smiling, well-compensated management weasels lurk over our shoulders, sweat-shop-like, to wring every possible drop of labor out of us idiotic, exploited, busy-workin' temporary employees. Last Tuesday and Wednesday, I helped unload literally thousands of heavy boxes from a truck and then shelving units up and down flights of stairs all day long, all for minimum wage and big promises of Urban Belonging. Like a sap. It's sinister.

Today, they even made me fill-out this 53-question, invasive, psychological profile/personality test regarding my ethics, personal drug use, "honesty", alcohol-consumption, etc. Appalling! If I was in my right frame of mind, instead of this indoctrinated, humiliated "slave mind", never would I have consented to such demeaning dogshit. It's none of fucking Urban Outfitters' fucking business what I've chosen to put in my body "in the last five years". All for a fucking retail job, selling ugly shit to rich girls. Fuck right off. Fuck you, you nosey, typical, Orwellian, hypocritical, exploitive, parasitical, uptight, enslaving, corporate motherfuckers. I really dropped the ball on that one, but I got young souls in my care, so the pricks kinda caught me off-guard and had me over the barrel. I even signed this "quiz" and put my social security number on it. What was I thinking???? I feel like I joined some cult...I did. Some call it the Adult World. Fuck the Adult World.

But back to the LORDS, let's recall how Our Hero, the much-worshipped and exalted Stiv, preached a gospel of freedom and individuality and going against the popular consensus and taking risks and breaking rules and not being afraid to piss people off. He admonished us to rise up and JOIN the Lords of the New Church, to literally BE a Lord, to not just idolize him, right? So what the fuck, bring it on Brian, gimme some of that old time religion. Word has it that Ozzie, the old drummer from my ultra-favorite super-unknowns, GUNFIRE DANCE, who later became the STEPPIN' RAZORS, is on skins. And by the way, Cheetah Chrome's new CD is available from www.duirecords.com!

"Music Is The Brandy Of The Damned..." (-George Bernard Shaw)

"All We Love Is Lonely Wreckage..." (-Manic Street Preachers)

FLAWED IS BEAUTIFUL....

Other eighties bands I dig who are currently reuniting include my big faves Dogs D'Amour, Flesh For Lulu, and the London Quireboys, as well as a rumoured Hanoi Rocks reunion (!!!) that I believe they're calling HANOI REVISITED. Last I heard, Sami Yaffa's moody reggae/atmospheric band, MAD JUANA, had moved to Spain. Everybody's reuniting: Faster Pussycat, the Bangles, the Go-Go's, Psychedelic Furs, Duran Duran, and even me, Brian Morgan, and Little Dave Weir from all my teenage bands. On the other hand, a really underrated corporate rock band that tried to straddle the worlds of cock-rock and power pop (a la Enuff Z Nuff) called the Marvelous Three just called it quits. I was hoping they'd get on some package tour with the 'Cherry. Ahhh well, no great loss, I'm sure they'll be a reunion someday...As always, I'm waitin' to hear new stuff from Tex Perkins, Slow Motorcade, the Hutchinsons, American Heartbreak, Beat Angels, Phoebe Legere, Paige Darling, Billy Burk, Brijitte West, John Easdale, Alistarr Lindell, and I'm

especially lit up about the new London Quireboys' CD, "This Is Rocknroll"...I'm hearing some murmurings about an album of new original sounds from the Boys, and that Desert Inn Record's Tribute to the Boys and Hollywood Brats, "You Wanna Know What It's Like", should finally be out any day now: <http://www.desertinn.it> — I even did a faint version of the Brats' "Nitemare" on it with a throw-together band, but don't let that discourage ya — there's loads of class acts participating, like Jeff Dahl and Sour Jazz, so you'll wanna pick up a couple of limited-edition copies to give as gifts. These are the same people who did that phenomenal tribute to the Dogs D'Amour a cuppla years back...Naturally, I'm also excited about this upcoming collaboration between Circus Of Power and David Allen Coe!

Is anybody willing to fork over some dough so that the new Motorcycle Boy line-up (featuring ex-Urge Overkill great, Blackie Onassis, who replaced Kenney Toy Boy on cans) can record? I sure as hell would — if I had the cash!...I also heard that former Celebrity Skin/Leaving Trains bassist, Tim Ferris, has joined the CRAMPS! Perfect! I still remember that Mojo Nixon "Horny Holidays" record release party when me and Tim Ferris (and Mojo!) were pretty much the only non-industry, suit and tied-types who showed up. Last I heard, poor ol' Mojo was a wacky morning-zoo radio D.J. here in Shitsinnati...Speakin' of the fabulous Leaving Trains, they're about to release a new album on Steel Cage Records called "Emotional Legs". I'm half-heartedly still trying to wring an interview about it out of the always scathingly funny, observant, and usually insightful Falling James Moreland, 'cause I don't get to see his articles in the *L.A. Weekly* and he's been slackin' on turnin' in his *Hit List* columns. He's easily one of my favorite storytellers — as well as everybody's fav'rite cross-dressing rock'n'roll action-figure...Maybe Long Gone John should put up the moolah for an upcoming Thunders/Palladin-style "Copycats"-type covers album starring Jeff Drake and Pleasant Gehman and friends. Whaddyathink? Meanwhiles, I understand the Vice Principals have split up and that the HUMBERS have reunited. The Beatings have been on tour with Michael Rank's amazing Snatches Of Pink, and also continue to produce the Alltime Best Glam-Trash-Punk T-Shirts. Check 'em out at www.altamontrecords.com — You'll thank me later...An open letter to American Heartbreak: whoever writes the lyrics, I wanna be your friend. Me and Jim Rinn, the President of my record company, I-94 Recordings, are dyin'to know who that absolutely great song "Superstar" was written about. I'm sorry my rave review of "Postcards" went unpublished 'cause I really, really love your band, despite habitually mocking Jetboy...I've heard a tune called "Tug Of War" from the next TRASH BRATS record that's John Lennon/Rolling Stones quality soul. In addition to being, by far, the best rock'n'roll frontman this side of the old guard (he ain't Iggy, Mick, or Michael...) TRASH BRATS vocalist BRIAN OBLIVION is a wizard, a true star. Get their exceptional pop/punk'n'roll album "American Disaster". It really showcases the versatility that sets the Trash Brats apart from most of their macho moronic punk contemporaries, who offer you thirteen (see, there's your number again...) songs that all sound the same: www.trashbrats.com, Joan Jett and Tommy Price'll tell ya — Ricky Rat is a guitar hero of Mick Ronson proportions...Joe Strummer continues in stride to do no wrong with his new album, "Global A Go Go" that reminds us how Joe and Wayne Kramer are both on top of their all-time respective games whereas Iggy's just really disappointed me with his last two records...Jeff Dahl's been steadily producing a lot of groups out at Devil Tree, like my man Siouxicide City Pete's

Chickenhawks and Mike Frame's Zillionaires, and I'm eager to hear the much-heralded Slash City Daggers. Hey Pickle, if you ever get the boot, you know who to call. An absolutely ESSENTIAL rock'n'roll compilation you oughta hear is called "Drunk on Rock, Vol. Two", which stars such leading lights of the Ultra Underground as the Malakas, Texas Terri & the Stiff Ones, the Stiletto Boys, the Golden Arms, Dimestore Haloes, (the amazing...) Teenage Frames (you gotta see their rantzine, "Trash"!), and my own pop rocker, "Nostalgia Kills". It's available dirt-cheap from I-94 Recordings. Their web address is tricky, so get a pen and pay attention:

<http://community-2.webtv.net/i94rec/I94Recordings/>
SUPPORT REAL ROCK'N'ROLL.

"Well Your Hero Is A Zero & You're Just Another Weirdo..." (-Hanoi Rocks)

"I'm A Stone Dead Tripper Dying In A Fantasy..." (Jesus & Mary Chain)

BADSVILLE, U.S.A.

Acetate Records, home of the fierce and fearsome Hangmen, sent me this kickass movie about the West Coast Glam-Trash-Punk'n'roll Underground that you absolutely gotta see called "Badsville". It's like a modern-day "Decline of Western Civilization" and stars some of my personal faves like the Hangmen, Bam & Share from Bubble and the Dogs D'Amour, and the eternally-praised Texas Titties; and it introduced me to the dangerous NY-Rockers, Man Scouts Of America, and L.A.'s own fabulous SuperBees (!) — who look like the Yardbirds and sound like vintage Gunfire Dance! Sensational! (Note: I'm still waiting for somebody to turn me on to the new Coma-Tones, Texacala Jones & the T.J. Hookers, Electrolux, Beautiful Creatures, Pure Rubbish, the Yo-Yo's, and the Darlings/Climactics...) This flick also finally answers my question about what ever happened to that gorgeous and talented former Mini-Skirt Mob vocalist, Jacqui Lynn (who's got a copy of that movie she did with Fuzztone Rudy Protrudi some years ago?!). She's in a sultry Acetate rockband called Dragbeat, who are definitely worth checkin' out! Particularly if you like your hot rod rock on the sleazy side. Also, a lot of cats who I thought were sorta has-beens ten years ago, God Bless 'Em, like Danny Nordahl from the Throbs, the Newlydead's Taime Downe, and Bebe Buell's ex-husband Coyote Shivers, are all presented here — yet again — as potential Next Big Things, giving this here aging rock'n'roll super-groovie all kinds a hope. 'Still no sign of Danny Nordahl's ex-NY Loose bandmate Brijitte West, though (who I want to sing on my next album); the liner notes were penned by the highly esteemed rock journalist S.L. Duff, and the whole sordid shebang loudly climaxes with TX Terri singin' "Down On the Street" with a skuzzy authority that has inspired millions to compare her to Ig — can't wait to hear her Jack Douglas-produced newer sounds. Demon Boy from the Stiff Ones is Ricky Rat's favorite current-day axe-man, if that tells you anything....

I still gotta con my skeptical girlfriend into sitting through this crucial documentary in order to prove that all my remaining rock'n'roll ambitions ain't as far-fetched as they often might seem, even when I'm friendless here in this awful town, enduring heaps of abuse, and getting turned down for lame jobs. Lookit these cats, the Super Bees, honey, they're hot in big city El Lay, right? Now listen to "Where Is Wendy" by DIMITRI

DIMITRIMONROE

MONROE & THE NAKED FLAMES! See, it's just a kiss a way, kiss a way, kiss a way...Essential viewing!

Support all the bands I mentioned here, Dave Kusworth and the Tenderhooks, Nikki Sudden, the Veins, the Coma-Tones, Sour Jazz, "AMERICA'S ONLY ROCKNROLL BAND": the Trash Brats, Leaving Trains, Nova Express, Bubble, Teenage Frames, JetSet, the Scarecrows, and my own ramshackle, hard-candy sweethearts, Dimitri Monroe & The Naked Flames. That is, if ya like the Real Rock'n'Roll. Some of you apparently don't, and that's OK, I guess...My Spiritual Forebearer, the Great Zodiac Mindwarp says, "It's primarily about grown men expressing the impotent rage of grown teenagers. Rock'n'roll is about the rage of hating your parents and school, having sex and talking about all the things that grown men should have grown out of by the time they're 29, like myself. Some of us lucky retards never grow up. There's an inherent stupidity to the rock genre which isn't necessarily a bad thing. You should embrace it without mocking it or becoming a parody...I'm content to celebrate dumbness with a certain panache." Exactly!

THE RETURN OF MISTER POPULAR....

The disreputable and debonaire thrill-seekers of SOUR JAZZ, whom I've recently written about for both *Hit List* and *Carbon 14* magazines, just sent me another high-water-mark album that's got both the suave atmospheric of shadowy film-noir and the catchiness of late-seventies punk/new wave, à la the Saints or Peter Perret. It features a desperately-swank-classy-trashy-bluesey-jazzy-spacey-beat-punk'n'roll-cocktail called "Lost For Life" that I highly recommend. This might be the best thing Ratboy's ever done, I shit you not. I assure you, there's really no reason to settle for anymore Hellacopters rip-off bands now that Rat, Splat, Lou, and Cow are back in action. Yeah, if you doubt me at all, go ask all our friends at the I-94 BAR or Darren Stockford from "She Didn't Like Rocknroll" — you honestly ought to get this as soon as you can. SOUR JAZZ are total rock'n'roll kings. They're really in a class all their own, right now (OK, them and Dragbeat...), relentlessly mining that swingin' Iggy/New Values velvet goldmine while mixing in piano and horns from 70's blaxploitation flicks and blackened-voodoo guitar stylings so mean and shitty that it's hard not to mistake them for Kim Salmon & the Surrealists; hip, funny lyrics and stylish, soulful influences from every great musical genre, ultimately creating some entirely fresh sounding, original, hook-laden new music. SOUR JAZZ only serve up Top-shelf, Quality Rock'n'Roll. Available through www.sourjazz.com.

Other stuff I can enthusiastically endorse if you've already ordered the new SOUR JAZZ CD would include voluptuous JACQUI LYNN'S smokin' new album, : "Pure Dirt" by her cool-ass 50's strip-club combo DRAGBEAT (Stay Tuned For An Interview!), Chick Graning, the Superbees, Darrell Bath, *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran, Sonny Vincent, Star Spangled, the Nasty On, the Spiders, Teenage Frames, the Dragons, Dogs D'Amour, solo Andy McCoy, Grilled Portobello Mushroom Sandwich from feel-good yuppie grocery chain Wild Oats, Tropi-Coco Sparkling Coconut Soda, Bill Hicks (R.I.P.), *MOJO* magazine, *The Big Takeover*, *Carbon* "You're Too Hip, Baby" 14, Henry Miller, Jungle Jim's grocery store, Flaming Stars, the Anchor Grille, Spike & Curly punkrock pins, Alt Park, Ian Dury,

HIT SQUAD

Demolition Doll Rods live, old Flo & Eddie, Eye-Tech Opticians in downtown Cincinnati, Joe Strummer, Inger Lorre, Ralph Nader, Edward Hopper, James Elroy, Bono, Howie & the Suicide Squad, Detroit Rock Photographer BRIAN T., and *From Freedom To Slavery: The Rebirth Of Tyranny In America* by Gerry Spence. Dig in, hellcats...

MANNEQUIN WORLD....

"Breathing Fire doesn't look good on a resumé..." (-Everclear)

"No One Wants To Pay Me For My Broken Heart..."
(-Dramarama)

It's 8:06 and my dietician, Mistie, will be arriving at 8:30 to take me to work at this Godless job (literally, it's in an old church they had de-Godded) at Urban Outfitters that I'm supposed to be grateful for, but I do NOT want to go. I just can't find a job I like. Every goddamn job is worse than the last, offering me less and less money to support my family with while steadily demanding more. This corporate retail shit ain't my bag at all. The rules, the sweatshop atmosphere, the trendy-chic, overpriced phoniness. They won't have a hard time replacing me — they get around 100 applications a day. Stores like this are the reason the landfills are full, they've discarded thousands and thousands of only once-used coat hangers and untold plastic and cardboard in the weeks I've worked there, and they're also part of the reason why all the thrift stores seem so depleted. They buy up vintage stuff by the bulk to sell at 2000 times their price to willing dupes who I can't feel at all sorry for. Don't spend your money at these chains that overcharge you, fuck up the environment, get hysterical with loss prevention paranoia, treat their own employees like crooks and slaves. Support the independents even if they're usually assholes, too (as Thee Whiskey Rebel has pointed out in *HL*, and he's right...). ("CONSIGNMENT" IS BULLSHIT. Independent CD stores should "support" independent bands if they expect the same!) I realize I'm just ranting, but I had to get it off my chest before I go back into that room fulla zombies who worship at the Urban-Alter this morning. Thanks for listening.

THAT'S SHOW-BIZ,BIG BOY....

Nine Hours Later: Today, I endured endless policy and procedure training courses all day long. It was worse than high school. Awful. Time just froze. Manuals, role-playing, company propaganda, the works — with an obsessive corporate emphasis on "shrink" or "loss-prevention", during which our trainer outlined "Urban's" priorities as follows: 1) Image. 2) Loss Prevention. 3) Customer Service. Their theory being that they got all the most sought-after, useless, flash trash us dummies crave, so they don't have to sweat selling anybody anything — it's all about protecting the company's bottom-line, merging one's self-interest with the company's, busting poor people with enthusiasm!

I dunno man, the brainwashing's even working on me. I see these good lookin' kids with their hip new threads and expensive haircuts, flawless skin, and supple breasts, jetting around opening stores on the company's dime, and I wanna piece of the action myself. I've paid enough dues and bear enough scars for five or six full-time fuck-ups, scrounging, barely getting

by, sleepin' in the car for years on end. Now I'm old, with kids to support, and feel I deserve some of that shiny, colorful, trendy kitsch. Where do I sign up? I want the paper lamps and the punk rock belts just like everybody else. I don't steal, so it was no surprise that I passed their mandatory psycho-analysis questionnaire, but I still resented it. I mean, what the fuck?

This is a good learning experience for a long gone cat like me, though, because I'm starting to understand how so many of my peers have been so duped by the modern American Ruse. Trading in their humanity and compassion for a ride on the consumer culture fast-track to the top of the corporate-retail shit-pile. They make it all seem so fucking appealing...Chances are, I'm just gonna get laid off when the store opens anyway, disposed of and replaced by some good lookin' kid who has nicer threads and a more "urbane" attitude. They can always tell I'm the skeptic, the heretic, the incorruptible. Just like in A.A. — no matter how hard I try. I'm just no good at kissing ass and fitting-in and sucking shit, so thus far I only ever seem to end up as the underpaid grunt who the stuffed-shirts can wipe their ass with when the shit-work is done.

If anybody reading this has any constructive/practical ideas about combating this bottom-line worshipping corporate wage-slavery and resisting having to sell your dignity for whatever — 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 bucks an hour, but still somehow being able to operate independently and thrive and provide for your own in this shitty world, please coach me, 'cause I seemed to have skipped that class while not really growing up.

Nowadays, all the mainstream kids look punk, but they're obedient and passive, and never question authority. Manic Panic hairdye and nose-rings and studs and tattoos are almost becoming like designer jeans and Izods when I was a kid. And in the meantime, all the bad guys are winning! www.hated.com Seven dollars an hour is a "Quality Of Life Crime", if ya ask me! I'm never gonna fit in these corporate environs...www.freespeech.org

"You Told Me Baby You Were Down To Kill/But Then You Threw Me Away Like An Overdue Bill..." (-Smithereens)

"But I Wish I'd Wrapped Myself In Thee..." (-Blue Oyster Cult)

BROKEN BUTTERFLIES....

More True Confessions: Like I mentioned last ish, now I got worry. I'm so perpetually overwhelmed and worn-down by grownup obligations here in the Middleage Wasteland these days that I've gradually even started succumbing to "square" ya'llternative country-rock music — the very "No Depression" or "Americana" shit that readers of my rant-rag *Burntout Recluse* have heard me summarily mock for years. I guess, in this hour, I just relate a lot more to the ruined singer-songwriter's hard-luck tales of failure, divorce, disappointment, and melancholy, the less-sexy side of actual grown-up alcoholism, than I do to friggin' STILL more shit from twenty-year olds in snakeskin cowboy hats screamin' in fake british/southern accents about getting laid and shooting pool/up.

I'm totally still down with Paul K. & the Prayers, Tex-Don-& Charlie, the Dirty Three, Tommy Womack, Chris Isaak, Lucinda Williams, Whiskeytown, Ryan Adams, David Olney, the Bottle Rockets, the Jayhawks, Nici Buehrig, the Sovines, the Dirty Three, and Golden Smog...

**I BET IF WE ASKED 'EM, OUR
HEROES WOULD SAY, "HEY! WE'RE
ALREADY GONE!"...I KNOW! SOME-
HOW, I KNOW....**

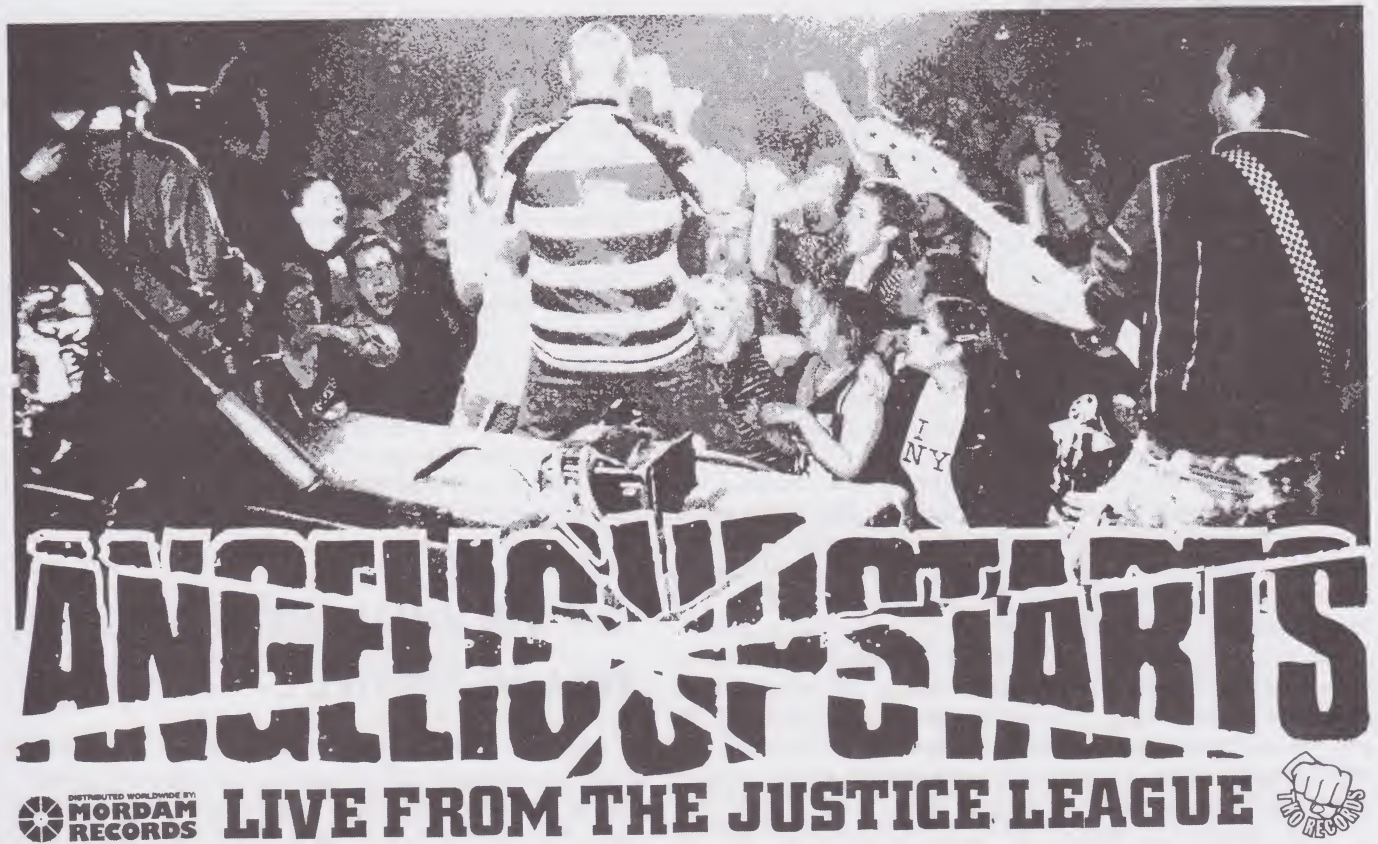
So, my good friends, even as I write this, in early July of 2001, guess who's back in circulation!! The Untouchable-One-&-Only-Human-Roman-Candle-Extraordinaire, Diamond David Lee Roth (!) is back on tour, playing Original Van Halen Classics for the People, while his misguided, millionaire former bandmates sit around their mansions, playing golf, endorsing apparatuses, and nursing their bruised egos, since the lame shit they did with that dork from Extreme flopped so predictably. Myself, I was always amazed that all that lousy, watered-down commercial-splodge they did with poor old "Red Rocker" Sammy Hagar ever sold any copies whatsoever, since it sucked so hard. (Note: Sammy Hagar is the chief reason that pro-legalization advocate J.D. MONROE don't smoke the ganja...'Cuz everytime he does, rationalizing that it's a safer, more harmless drug than the dangerous brown liquors of his shattered past, he invariably ends up in a spinning room that reeks of bongwater, with cotton mouth and a resin-sheen, no cabfare home, and some terribly misguided host who's mercilessly commandeering the stereo and insisting that he ain't given vintage Montrose a fair listen! See what

DIMITRIMONROE

kinda bizarre nitemare I inhabit?)

DAVID LEE ROTH IS AND WAS the true spirit of what "Van Halen" meant to all of us real-rock'n'roll-fanatics...The embarrassingly sub-par Van Hagar version only appealed to guitar-tech-nerds and lowest-common-denominator dental secretaries and armchair sports fans. The Mall-Dupes...TV Dummies. *People Magazine* people. The same folks who pay to see Brad Pitt and Julia Roberts and Matt Damon and Sandra Bullock movies, who think Ben Affleck and Drew Barrymore are cutting-edge. The excruciatingly unimaginative ones who spend their money exactly where they're told on new cars and chicken wings and ugly clothes and new video-game systems and pay-per-view-specials, who drink too many watered-down margaritas and sing-along loudly to Neil Diamond and Jimmy Buffet songs at chain-Mexican restaurants. Who watch Court TV and all those MSNBC jail shows and root for the bounty hunters and corrections officers.

I won't get a chance to catch the "DAVID LEE ROTH SAVES THE DAY TOUR" due to chronic poverty, but for some reason it does my heart good that both BRIAN WILSON and DAVID LEE ROTH are back in action! I'm California Dreamin' on the Fourth Of July, listening to Brian Wilson singing, "Caroline No", and thinkin' about a certain lonestar queen who's supposedly waitin' for me at the edge of summer or seventeen or somewhere down



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HIT SQUAD

in Mystery City...

Checkout www.dlrrarmy.com and www.davidleeroth.com to stay hip to all the rich, bulging pageantry of Mister Entertainment's showdates near you. Do you damn kids remember that Beach Boys song that went, "If everybody had an ocean across the U.S.A."? Well, prob'ly not, but you can still bet Angelina Jolie's string bikini that Diamond Dave's gonna be bringing all the fanfare, all the spectacle, all the inflatable phal-luses and palm trees, and all the hoopla and tiki torches to you, in your own backyard! "Now I don't know what you might have heard/But what I need right now is the original good time girl..." If you've been listening to any of those bands with the word "Hell" in their name, who have song titles featuring the words "Sin" or "The Devil", and you've found yourself recently acquiring more tattooed portraits of old country stars you'd never listened to intentionally the year before last, or spending half the day bending your cowboy hat into shape, or working on your pompadour, and believing that any of these bearded, satanic red-necks in bands like the Flaming Eightballs know how to throw a party, you owe it to yourself to catch D.L.R. live. Even the in-the-know unwashed and hairy hipsters you know will probably admit to ya that he's the greatest entertainment value out there. If you've seen KISS and NASHVILLE PUSSY live, go see ROTH. He's the King. The Ric Flair of Arena Rock. I'm only tryin' to help...

ASHES & GHOSTS...

Speaking of Yesterday's Badasses, the mighty CULT have returned with another gothic big-rock CD called "Beyond Good & Evil", which is mandatory summertime listening for True Believers and Burntout Recluses alike. I was a little skeptical when I heard it was being produced by Mick Jones — not "our" Mick Jones, but rather the guy from Foreigner! — and 'cause they'd recorded a tune penned by Diane Warren — Aerosmith's for-hire, syrup-mongering song doctor. And Ian's appearance with the surviving DOORS on VH1 was less persuasive than one might have hoped. But the single "Rise" seems to be getting a surprisingly strong industry-shove and all the hicks who buy neo-nü-metal and like Fuel and Filter have been blaring it in passing cars, so y'know, I probably just need to allow the new tunes time to sink in a little more.

That last self-titled disc of theirs (with the goat on the cover) was an exceptional collection of outstanding, emotive, hard-soul anthems that no one besides me and the Sleazy One seemed to get off on, but it took me a while to get it. I had a part-time job last year at a suckass suburban Top-40 CD store, and the Cult rarities box-set came through, used, but I still couldn't remotely afford to purchase it so it was all I ever listened to in-store... "Bleeding Heart Graffiti" has become another one of my personal, all-time theme songs. (The box-set eventually sold to a COP! I was dying to ask the guy how he reconciled a love for the Cult with being an agent of control, but I never really enjoy engaging those guys in conversation.)

Those aging warrior-souls IAN ASTBURY and BILLY DUFFY are bringing all their majick-tinged hellfire and white-winged glory back to commercial radio stations and half-empty arenas this summer, touring with MONSTER MAGNET. I can't imagine who can afford to go see live music nowadays in that context,

after the dreaded Ticket-Master has their evil way with your loathsome credit card and you pay for parking, but I wish THE CULT all the best of everything. Ian Astbury's holy-barbaric battle-hymns of love and war scorched a fiery rock'n'roll brand on my soul as a whisky-crazed teenage hellion, and songs like "She Sells Sanctuary" and "Revolution" will haunt me 'til I'm gone...I'm into Real Rock'n'Roll, so I'd much prefer the return of biker-boogie-psychedelic-love-metal and pagan wolfmen in S.S. trousers to still more bouncey, cutesy, smiley, whacky '77/Ramones/We Wear Devo Sunglasses And Socks On Our Dicks/Rich Kid-Eleventh-Generation-Retro-Rehash!

Back in the early 90s all these brilliant dinosaurs still ruled the wasteland — righteous warlocks and iconic shamens like IAN ASTBURY and ZODIAC MINDWARP & THE LOVE REACTION and L'Andrew Wood from MOTHER LOVE BONE and ALEX MITCHELL from CIRCUS OF POWER. Y'know, I still kinda miss those thirsty kings. Trustfund Rock and Techno and East Bay "Don't Call It Emo" preppie punk ain't leavin' no impression on me whatsoever. Bring back the black leather and chrome and big, pointy witch hats and hollowbody guitars! FULL DISCLOSURE: Personally, after just a few more cursory listens, I'm still having trouble really connecting with this Cult album. I mean, I'm fully getting in the spirit, but I'm not drinking today, can't play it loud, can't go anywhere, and continue to grind my wheels in the mire of increasingly diminished self-esteem and the lowered expectations accompanying this thankless, harrowing Jerry Springer-Existence/wage-slave rut I'm in, so the problem is probably mine and not the Cult's. "Shape The Sky" is clearly a bullet-proof, stone cold hit!

I couldn't really feel that second BUCK CHERRY record, either — the one with all the secondhand gangsta rap lyrics and a lame piano ballad that my old cohort thought was "better than teenage pussy"! (Sorry, Ginger. I still love ya, baby.) It's the same with the BACKYARD BABIES and HARCORE SUPERSTAR — it all just leaves me cold. "Is something wrong with me/Or something wrong with you/I really wish I knew, wish I knew, wish I knew..." Where can you turn when even the cream of the crop of modern underground rock bands have zero impact on your bleak outlook on life? Every time I hear some halfway decent, much-hyped, modern heavy-rock or punk-metal band, I'm always just thinkin' "They ain't no motherfucking CIRCUS OF POWER". Y'know?

Thumbs up on NICK CAVE'S "No More Shall We Part". Beautiful piano and his Biblical Voice from Baptist Hell. The song "God Is In The House" reminds me of Cincinnati's politicians. Thumbs down on Iggy's "Beat 'Em Up". Anybody wanna hear Iggy try to sound like friggin Korn? "Naughty Little Doggy" was so great, Ig. What were ya thinkin'?

RUNNIN' ON LEGENDS AND THE WILL TO SURVIVE....

There's a lot of excitement in the air, as me and Mistie, my faithful nutritionist, are preparing to resume my savage journey, makin' a break for the coast, lighting out for the territory, riding the code of the cactus, next week, or sooner, in search of light and hope and song and kicks. Right now, the plan is to start on the East Coast, do some recording with my old pals Brian Morgan and Dave Weir, and maybe Phoebe or some random Sour Jazzbo's if they're available; eat falafels, ride the 'stinky sub-

ways, soak up some new vibrations, then head out west. On Route 66. You know how this All-American Puttin' The Show On The Road-Trip goes. "The West is the best/You get here and we'll do the rest". I've been craving an old fashioned, cross-country, Travelling-Wild-West-Show-Wing-A-Ding-Ramshackle-Last-Ditch-11th Hour- Rock'n'roll-Mercy Mission-And Maximum Rhythm & Blues Revue-With No Particular Place To Go-Hobo-Bozo-Misadventure for a long, long time.

For years, I've been needlessly stranded here in Ohio where there ain't no REAL fun to be had. Of course, I'm gonna miss my kids something fierce throughout this desperate tour of duty, as we're as thick as thieves, but I need to get some fresh air, do some writing and music, convene with old friends, get something done, and the wise old lady, my beautiful Paula, has even given her blessings. She knows, in her heart of hearts, that I ain't no deep-fryer. Telemarketing ain't my calling. I'm more than a Tool or a Dish-Washer, y'know? I just haven't worked out the way to be me but still buy her the Volvo and the farmhouse with the peacocks and eccentric sculptures on the land quite yet — but you know I won't give up...I REMAIN JASON DIMITRI MONROE, THE LAST OF THE LAST OF THE LAST OF THE LAST!

AND HOW MUCH MORE, BABIES, CAN YOU ASK? I gotta get some business cards made. What should they say on 'em? Crime Fighter. Torch-Singer. Clown-Prince. Hopeful Soda Jerk. Beat Poet. Freedom Fighter. Conjuror of Mischief. Friend Of The Community. Defender Of The Meek. Keeper Of The Flame. Your Favorite Vagrant...and all these. Meanwhile, unappreciative Cincinnatians keep trying to hand me the mop!

We might be gone for awhile...It's July 20th and I opened up Cincinnati's *City-Beat* magazine today; it's always the same old story, the same old song and dance, my friends...Still more adult bookstore sting-operations, P & G's non-stop animal testing. Silencing Of Dissent. Censorship. Corruption. Corporate Rule. False Arrests. Police Brutality and Racial Profiling...Sports, Chili Dogs, and Authoritarianism. "Disorderly conduct and resisting arrest" (Hey, man, I just don't look good in Khakis!) Enslavement or Incarceration, and this wicked Bush & Cheney Administration's Heartless Global-Capitalism without conscience. Gary Condit, our blind devotion to Israel. FUCK THIS SHIT. Rule Of The Few (Just How Some Of Youse Seem To Like It — Not Me, Baby.) I'm goin' back to what I know, goin' back where I belong, we're never Goin' Radio, so I'm holdin' fast to our Rebel Songs! Are ya with me? How's the pirate king in you holdin' up, brothers and sisters? Are you feelin' FREE? To be yourself and live peacefully? To Eat, Drink, and Be Whatever The Fuck You Wanna Be?...Just One Vast Alternative News Resource That Reports Some World Events, Not Exclusively From The Perspective Of The Mondo-Rich Powers That Be or U.S. Military-Industrial Complex, that you might wanna consider perusing, if you doubt some of what you hear on MSNBC and in the Corporate Media At Large, are *Z* and *The Progressive* magazines. They both contain a lot of

compelling food for thought, OK? Another View...Stuff To Think About, besides the corporate party line horseshit and video games and pro wrestling and trendy bath products named after yoga positions. I hope to attend the *Z* Magazine Institute's annual seminar in Cambridge this year. www.zmag.org

HOWLIN' DOWN THE HIGHWAY WITH A DONUT IN MY HAND...

Pseudo-Tour-Diary. August Eighth: So my longtime runnin' buddy, Nasty Bastard, the miserable guitar player in my old band of drunken sociopaths, the Original Suffering Bastards, showed up unexpectedly, as he's wont to do, with that dangerous glint in his eye, and I knew we'd be leaving town. Good old Nasty got me as far as Masonville, NY before his thirty-year old VW van broke

down and we hadda call in friends to come rescue us. I wasted a week or so in Boston, but as usual there wasn't nothin' happenin' at all, so I Bat-Phoned Mistie, the dietician, who showed up to take me on in to NYC where we saw a great film, "Downtown 81" starring Basquiat, and discovered one of my all-time favorite record shops, Wowsville in Manhattan, where Dee Dee Ramone's original paintings are available. We shopped, saw friends, made some new ones, took pictures, hung out all over downtown for a week, and recorded an

Good old Nasty got me as far as Masonville, NY before his thirty-year old VW van broke down and we hadda call in friends to come rescue us.

EP's worth of fresh material with the guys from all my teenage bands in Brooklyn. Just eating french fries on Second Avenue, watchin' all the pretty girls go by, is better than anything the fuckin' Gap and VH1 have to offer me back home in the suburbs of the Midwest. I saw Jesse from D-Generation in front of what used to be King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, and told him how I love his song "Helpless". I only wished I'd had some long green for some new threads, but it seems my money star is thus far still on the wane...I saw some 45-year old man in a Dead Boys t-shirt nodding out on the steps in front of that big white building on St. Mark's Place — talk about living out pathetic clichés!

Keith Richards' producer on "Talk Is Cheap" dates a woman who owns a NY bar called Luna, and she plays bass in this band which covers a lot of my songs. The producer-boyfriend has apparently been praising my original work that's being covered by his old lady, along with an old cronie of mine, for being "real". Intriguing, huh? The drummer of this same band, which is even going so far as to resurrect one of my old band names, PALE IMITATIONS, loves my tunes as well, and he used to play with Syl Sylvain and Johnny Thunders. So ultimately, I sort of have my own tribute act/covers band (!) — even though I've yet to release a full-length album. Crazy, huh? To hear some versions of dumb

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songs I wrote ten years ago, checkout www.pantycopter.com/pi. My buddy Ron put all this together and sings; he's kind of like Kim Fowley, plays a bad guitar, and he used to be in a band with Reeves Gabrels.

It was, ultimately, an amazing, triumphant, and productive trip! The NYC leg of the trip anyway...The Candy Snatchers musta wrote "Your City Sucks" about either Boston or Censornatti. Now, I'm pleased as punch to just be back here for a few weeks with my beautiful, gorgeous, sexy girlfriend, Paula, who I missed almost as much as our effervescent, sweet-hearted, wonderful children. Next week, it's onto Columbus to see my friends THE HEALERS; then onto Detroit to record with my other band, I-94 Recording Artists THE NAKED FLAMES; then, to Louisville, Kentucky to see Paul K. and the Prayers' new six piece incarnation — they got a killer new disc comin' out anyday now called "The Night We Cheated Death"; and the sky's the limit from there on. I'm reclaiming my sovereignty. "I'm off to be the wizard"...Getcher shoes on, and you can come along, too!

SOMEDAY WE'LL ALL GET OUT OF HERE...

My Soul-Sister, Mean Khrystein The Hell-Fire Queen, keeps a list of all the People Who Died in the back of her old poetry

book, most of whom we met hangin' out at this violent dive bar in Cincinnati called the Sub Galley. She called the other day to say she had to add two more people to the list. Both of their initials were J.P., both were old girlfriends of mine who I'd met at that bar and hadn't seen in a long, long time, and both sadly took themselves from this world on the same day. Be good to your loved ones. It's all too brief, and we are all so fucking brittle.

"When you check out of this hotel, Jack, you're nothin' but an autograph..." (-Peter Laughner)

Deceased #1: Jonna Sunflower...

I don't remember quite how I met her, but her hair was French Vanilla Blonde. She had freckles all over her chest and body. Marajuana-breath-kisses, and the knockout, generous, sixty-mile smile of a million dollar model. She was part hardened honky-tonkin' whiskey woman, and part childlike hippiechick. All of us rhinestone cowboys loved her. The legendary Poet/Blues-Belter/World Famous Street-Musician, Mark Battelle, used to call her "My Ivory Girl". Me and Visionarie Artist Dan Curry (www.oneeyedking.com) met each other because of her, and on one occasion we even showed up at the evil bar at the same time, both clad in leather cowboy hats, both with the same idea of bringing her roses on her birthday. I remember her saying that she fell in love with me and my son Christian years ago, when she watched us playing in the park before we knew her. She used to babysit him. She always asked me to run away with her and live in a teepee. Trash talk on the street has it that her mother killed herself at the same age and Jonna was upset that her beauty was fading. Crazy, 'cause I coul-

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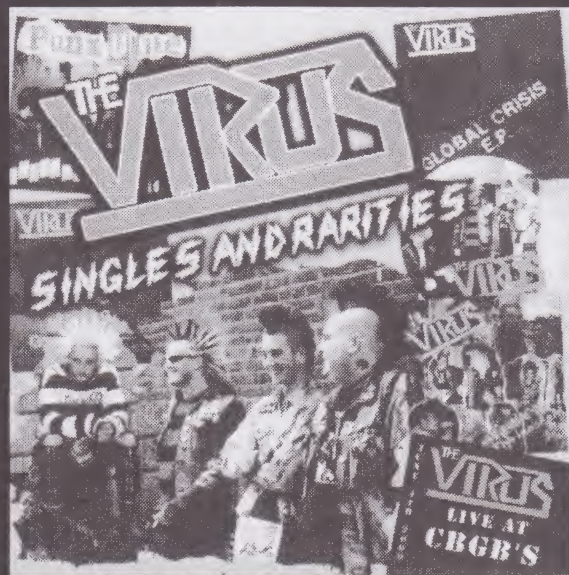
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da easily assured her she was truly a wonder to behold even after years and years of hard livin'. I cannot picture her in my mind unsmiling. I'll miss ya, Jonna.

Deceased #2: Jen...

Four or five years back, I had been in the psychotic throes of a pointless heartbreak that eventually unraveled my whole personality for awhile and had me weeping, blind, drunk, bloody — wasted, blacked-out in the street for close to two years. My Bar Friends, Ellen & Artie who liked to party, introduced me to this beautiful, compassionate, sexy, kind girl named Jennifer. Jen was a mulatto sorta beauty with big eyes and perfect teeth who reminded me of another lost angel we called Spacey Tracey (R.I.P.). She just wanted to hang around and console me. Ellen & Artie used to take me and Jen dancing at this all-black jazz bar on Bank Street in the ghetto called Trotters, and me and Jen, in her black-sequined dress and no underwear, we'd dance and kiss all night long. We slept together every night for a month, when I was living in Paranoid Jason's (R.I.P.) squat apt., after Andy. (Andy went to jail.) But we never really, y'know, made it, 'cause I was still too torn up over another old flame, and for some strange reason women don't seem to find it all that erotic when you're in their beds vomiting and weeping and snot's drippin' from your nose in long strands, especially when it's over some other woman. Mysterious creatures, aren't they? Anyway, she got bored and finally dumped me for Young Ben, my drinking understudy.

Eventually, she made a long series of poor choices, being an addict, and eventually disintegrated in a very public way. And, like me, she was judged severely by that hard, sleazy, gutlessly small-town, Sudsys' pecking-order with all their pious opinions and endless double standards. A tragic shame. Even if, like me, in their eyes she was a helpless or seemingly insufficient or even despicable human being, she was a human being, y'know? Worst of all, she was somebody's mommy. She's dead now. Yeah, it's horrific.

A Note To Clifton: WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE? WHERE ARE ALL YOUR STERLING ACCOMPLISHMENTS, BARFLIES? What important shit are you doin' with YOUR lives? Gettin' drunker and fatter, eatin' nachos, and watchin' college basketball on a broken barstool in a dirty college campus scenester-pub full of inebriated half-strangers, back-stabbing each other, and sleeping with one another's mates, squandering your family's fortunes, while obnoxiously editorializing about those less fortunate or those who came to seemy ends...year after year after fucking year? Folks 'round here seem to think there's something to be gained by character-assassinating people in front of their children, or by speaking ill of a cadaver. These cut-throat yokels

DIMITRIMONROE

got no heart. Everythings a race to them. Who's winning, clout, hipster-prestige, acquisition of plastic status-symbols, that's all that counts, all they seem capable of grasping, even when confronted with actual real life and death tragedy. WHERE'S THE MERCY? It ain't at the coke bar...God Bless ya, baby. I knew yer heart.

DONCHU KNOW IT IS WRONG TO CHEAT THE TRYIN' MAN...

I can't even count how many deadend jobs I've had where I've endured some demeaning interview with a mindless tool/compa-

ny jerkoff; shown up; put on the hairnet and brown uniform; worked hard; done the math; and realized that yet another rich, selfish, unscrupulous, sonofabitch wants to chump me out of hours or not pay me at all...

If the so-called justice system wasn't merely a rigged sham to protect the very interests of these same dirty, stinkin' crooks, I could rattle off five or six different names of former employers rightthere who've refused to pay me for services rendered, and without fear of being sued for slander, cuz all these swine would know I was just telling the truth. A pox on these golf-shirts, these tiny tyrants, these selfish, swindling, greed-head vermin who suck

unskilled laborers dry and spit them out, gloating...I've got children to feed...Just Pay Me. How do they sleep?

Which is why I consistently beg my apathetic 13-year-old son to meet the minimal requirements at his School For The Creative & Performing Arts, explaining the necessity of a graduate degree in this spooky age and how he doesn't wanna someday find himself winding up as a 29-year-old, doing something demoralizing for six bucks an hour, and being handed a mop by a 19-year-old asshole whose only qualifications to be Assistant Manager are usually nice teeth, a knack for ass-kissing, and that confidence instilled in rich kids by wealthy, indulgent Mothers and soccer trophies: "When you get done hosing out the dumpsters, if you could hit the urinals and baseboards in the men's and women's restrooms before you leave, that'd be SUPER." I desperately want him to stay in the game and get an education so that he can design action figures or comic books or video games for a living and end up making some real money doing something he finds stimulating and rewarding, as well as to be able to drive a car and live in a big house and enjoy some travel

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and freedom rather than just flailing helplessly from one bad, exploitive experience to the next, like his broken-spirited, wastrel father, the World's Oldest Busboy. If it was just me, I'd probably be sipping something sweet and strong out of a coconut in Baja or New Orleans or someplace sandy and near the water, content to play the wicked roué forever. I'm always lookin' for a nice place to lounge...but being as how I get girls pregnant just by lookin' at 'em, resulting in these three smart, sensitive, good-hearted, glorious kids; my dream, my purpose, my mission, is to stay alive long enough to strike it middle-class someday, for their sakes, before I croak. So I can at least pay for their school or give 'em a house or some start-up capital so that they can go into business. Or something.

How absurd is it to be born into this world, without asking, and if your parents don't have their shit together, to be penalized from Day One and eventually forced into some kinda jive-ass labor that doesn't even supply one with a living wage, let alone an "Anyone Can Be A Business Owner Or C.E.O. in Amer-ee-ka" outdated dream. And then, to have to turn all that money over to the constant nagging of the Big Extortionists...the Insurance Companies, the Slumlords, the I.R.S., the Man, etc. What we got right here, right now, is obviously Taxation Without Representation in the "land of the free and home of the brave." Whatever happened to "Life, Liberty & The Pursuit Of Happiness..." people? I understand that the educated and prosperous among us don't appreciate hearing the whining of the working poor, 'cause everything looks GREAT with a pocketfulla credit cards from the window of an air conditioned office and with reggae music on the CD player, but I trust all you scholars in the audience here tonight know what the Constitution tells us our DUTY is, as Americans, when our government becomes irretrievably corrupt. Right?

Many Talk Radio Propagandists continue to focus on tired tales of intern-blowjobs from years ago, but who cares? How about hearing more about Paid-Off Presidential Pardons or Vanished-From-The-Face-Of-The-Earth Mistresses or That Entire Last Fraudulent Presidential Election?!! "Corporations have been enthroned and an era of corruption will follow and the money power of the country will endeavour to prolong its reign by working upon the prejudices of the people until all wealth is in a few hands and the Republic is destroyed..." (-Abraham Lincoln)

"Oh I Believe It's All Because Daddy's Paycheck Is Not Enough..." (-Wilco)

"I May Look Good On The Outside, But I'm Broken On The Inside..." (-John Easdale)

HE'S THE GALACTIC KID...

If, like me, you're still waitin' for that evil, damned, no-good-nik Alice Starr, of classic Triple XXX band the ULTRAS fame, to rise from the ashes of shameful dalliances with disgruntled former Marilyn Manson sidemen and return to ultraviolet-like-splendor in some shining new incarnation, I've found something pretty exciting to tide you over until then. The ULTRAS video for "Galactic Kid" can be seen online at this awesome treasure trove of old L.A. punk, goth, and glitter punk, now dig this — www.hipmagazine.com! Amazing website! We're talkin' flyers, downloads, poetry, links, video, the whole shebang, starring the

likes of Francois and Inger and Falling and Johnette and Rozz and Kommunity FK and Iris and Plez — the works! An orgy of West Coast Underground-cultural delights. You better go check it out. Who knows what happened to old Alice, Post-Dali Gaggers?? And when are we gonna resurrect the Sonic Medusa, baby?

YOU LOST THAT ATTITUDE, YOU ACT SO OLD...

"Ah, They Don't Let A Woman Kill You/Not In The Tower Of Song..." (-Leonard Cohen)

"I Will Wait Right Here For You..." (-Paul K.)

Straight society, these lame suburbanites chasing strings, play-acting "cult of celebrity", are just never gonna accept me. No one can think for themselves in this town. Not the vinyl-clad chicks, or the record store owners, or the so-called rockers and musicians who run the bars. Everybody's following the followers, still hoping to make a buck on other people's ideas that weren't that innovative or original to begin with. The mean-spirited in-crowd just like to ask me for creative counsel and then utilize my stuff, but will later exclude me. People 'round here always want me to coach 'em on their efforts to buy their fake "cool" or to pretend that they "rock", but they won't ever give me a job. Screw 'em! High School Never Ends. Eighth Grade To Eternity is the story of our lives.

ALL THE NAMES YOU DROP ARE SECOND-HAND, I'VE HEARD IT ALL BEFORE...

It's interesting to me, these things I'm observing/experiencing since we've all started turnin' 29. Everybody's scrambling to get over the wall and into the sprawl, catching up with the herd, and cashing in on the latest trend. I don't blame 'em, really, it's sorta pathetic being me. Like that Lester Bangs bio sez, "Thirty year old men aren't supposed to walk around in leather jackets, unemployed."

Status-Seeking. I suppose that's how you keep a home together, though, huh? MP3 Players and New Cars. Pay-Per-View and \$1,000 rents. Dollar signs and Haircuts...I hadda reduce the chemical intake to almost nil, 'cause it kept opening the lid on my id. These days, I'm feeling less like Rip Van Winkle with my beard, beer gut, and rusty gun, and more like the nervous hare, late for the tea party. Old friends have forsaken me, women leave, money changes everything. I dunno, man, I'm outta time. A laughingstock. A parody of a punch-line. It hurts. I got nothin' but bills, songs, fractured dreams, chronic worries, gorgeous kids (no, you won't fool the children of the revolution...!), a bad reputation, ulcers, exes galore, hang-ups, heartaches, depression, and shame. I'd do it all again, though. I hope someone out there is still rooting for us. Keep In Touch. Sorry For The Phone Bills. I can be contacted at BurntoutRecluse@aol.com. Send me love, brothers and sisters. I'm here for you. ☺

(DIMITRI MONROE CAN'T GET BACK TO THE SUMMER.)

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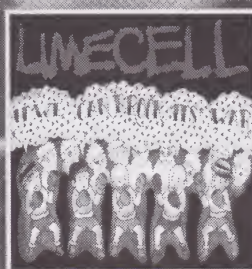
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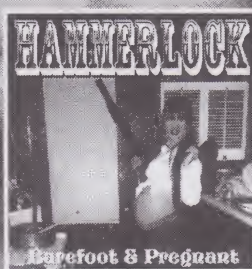
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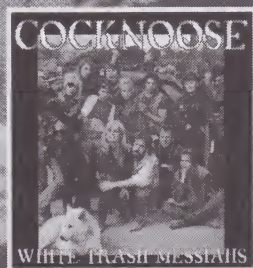
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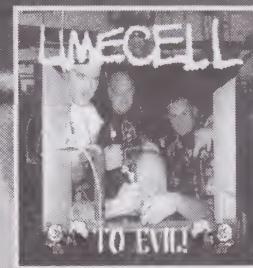
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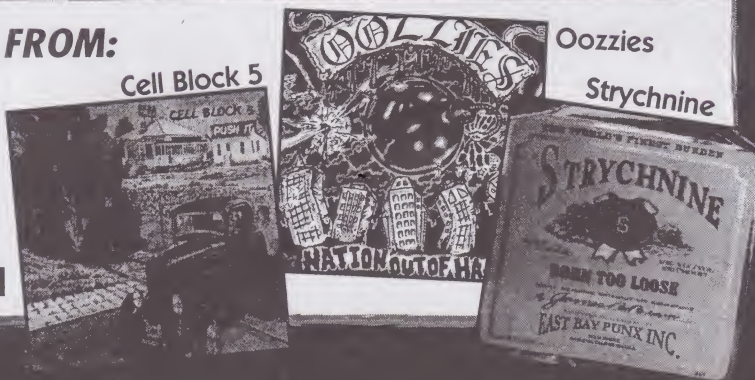
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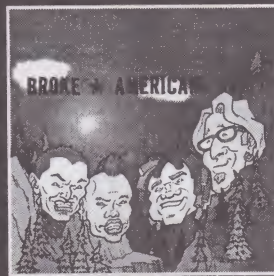
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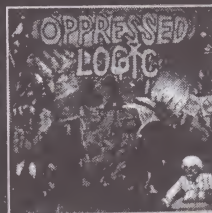


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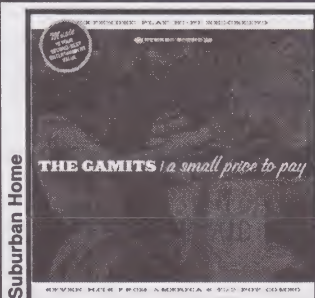
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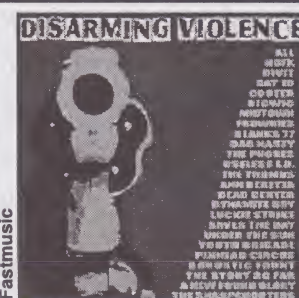
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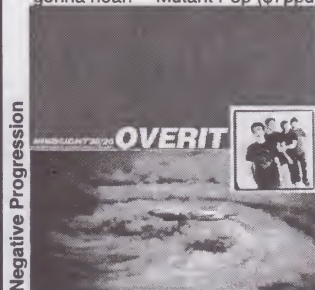
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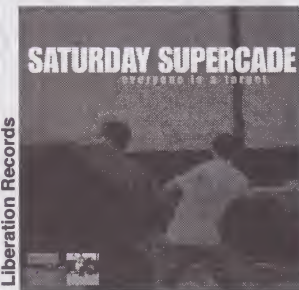
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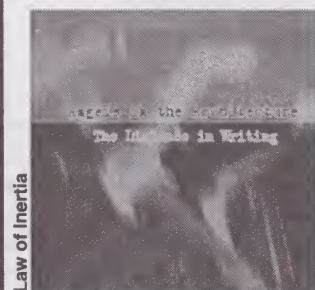
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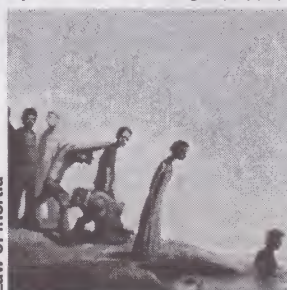
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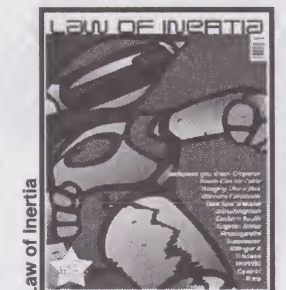
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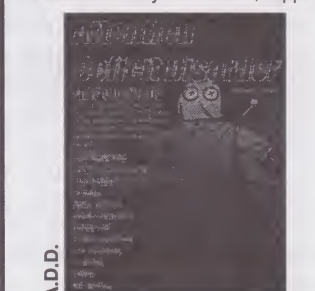
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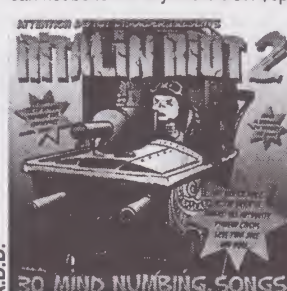
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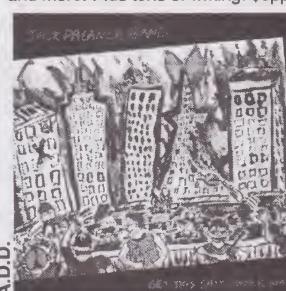
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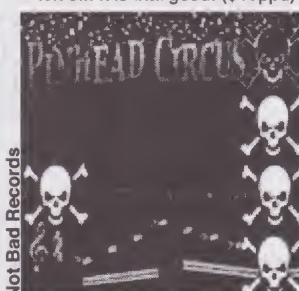
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by Larry Livermore

photos by Jackson Tzulo

GREEN DAY

It's been thirteen years since the first time I saw Green Day, and I've already told the story so many times that I won't dwell on it again.

Suffice it to say that I was completely bowled over by these young kids who'd only been together as a band for a few weeks, who had just come on a wild goose chase of nearly 200 miles to play a gig in a freezing mountain cabin for about five bored teenagers, and who still managed to pull it off as though they were the Beatles at Shea Stadium. I'm not going to claim I knew how big they were going to get a few years down the line, or how their success would change the punk rock scene forever. I just knew that bands like this didn't come along very often.

Green Day were by far the most famous band to come out of the East Bay and Gilman Street scene, but they were only a part of that scene, a scene which itself has reshaped the ideals and image of punk rock in ways that, depending who you're listening to, might be for better or worse. Billie Joe Armstrong, guitarist and lead singer for Green Day, more or less grew up at Gilman Street, and both of us count the years we spent there as among the most important of our lives. I had the honor of working with Green Day for their first two albums, before they moved on to Reprise Records and megaplatinum superstardom. Their drummer, Tre Cool, is an alumnus of my punk rock band, the Lookouts. A lot of stuff has gone on since 1988, and one day last summer, Billie Joe and I sat down to have a talk about it all.

LL: Okay, you're coming up on your 30th birthday. The 20s are a pretty tumultuous decade for most people.

It's when they get started with life on their own, when they make all sorts of choices and all sorts of mistakes. And looking back on your 20s, you probably carried that to an extreme. When you were turning 20, your second album, *Kerplunk*, had just come out, you were part of a band that was starting to get some attention, but still playing a lot of garages and basements and small clubs. You might have been making enough money to keep you alive, but barely enough to call it making a living. I'd like you to think about the contrast between then and now, and how you got from there to here... It's an obvious question, but could you even have imagined what the next ten years were going to bring for you?

BJ: I think at the time I felt kind of bum-rushed to think about my future. A lot of it had to do with being in Europe. It was our first time in Europe, we were doing the squats and pub gigs with Christy Colcord and Aidan, and, you know, it was just kind of scary. I think all of us were scared because we didn't know what our future



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was going to be at all. Reaching 20 was scary, too, because I was like, "Holy shit, I'm not a teenager anymore." I felt old, which is ridiculous to think about now, but back then we felt like things had to start moving or something for us.

LL: Are we talking about the typical thing a 20-year old goes through, "What am I going to do for a living, I can't live with Mom and Dad anymore"? Or was it more about "What's going to happen with my music?"

BJ: That's what a lot of it was about. There's a side of you that feels you're kind of dying or something, and you're scared of that, but then there's the question of what's going to happen with this music, this work we're gonna do? Is it only going to be cool right now to the punk rock scene, or uncool to the punk rock scene, depending upon who you talk to? Is it just going to be forgotten, and will another group of guys come along and take our place? You really start to think about your potential as a musician and an artist, and as a human being, for that matter. You don't want it to be all for nothing, and I think that's one thing that was different with us than with other bands. We lived for our music a lot more than other bands did. Other bands seemed more set on things like going to school and playing music on the side, or having a job and playing music on the side, whereas we wanted to fully live and breathe our music...

LL: You've said in the past that you didn't really have anything else besides your music.

BJ: That's true. And we were all really passionate about it. We weren't just pretending, we weren't just trying to be punk rockers, we were also good musicians. But at some point you start thinking, you can't do this forever, can you? So you want to get as much out of it as you possibly can...

LL: You'd sold about 10,000 records, which in those days was pretty good for the underground punk scene, but was hardly enough to base a career on. Did you have any real doubts about whether you were going to be able to keep playing music, maybe even make a living at it?

BJ: At that point I'd been playing music my whole life anyway. I knew that I would end up playing music regardless...

LL: ...of whether you got paid or not?

BJ: Yeah. I just didn't want to be one of those guys driving around in a car with a

bumper sticker that said "Real Musicians Have Day Jobs."

LL: Yeah, those really piss me off. It's like you're saying "I'm a genius, the world just doesn't understand me," and I'm like, "If you're such a genius, how come nobody else seems to realize it?"

BJ: Even after all the success we've had, I've stayed active in the punk scene, and I've really had the choice of whether or not I wanted to. I still have that choice: I could be just some bloated rock star or I could keep busy helping my friends' bands out, things like playing bass with the Influents, putting out records by bands that I respect...I don't have to do that, obviously.

LL: On the other hand, what about the appeal of being a bloated rock star? Have you checked that scene out as well?

BJ: That sounds more like dying.

LL: I was being slightly sarcastic.

BJ: Seriously, though, that doesn't sound like any fun at all to me.

LL: I'd like to come back to the concept of bloated rock stars later, but you brought up something else I wanted to touch on, which was your connection with the punk scene while at the same time being a musician. Put it this way: when I met you, you were 16, had long hair, and smoked a lot of pot. You didn't fit the image of a punk. You came across more like a kid who just loved to play music. So I'd like to find out a little more about how you got to that point, what you'd been doing in the years before I met you, what made Billie who he was.

BJ: I was a singer from a very young age, I was singing these sort of Brat Pack songs, you know. My dad was kind of a typical Guido, he was a jazz drummer, so I think that influenced the kind of music I first got into. It's kind of strange, you know, an eight-year old singing "Satin Doll" or something like that.

LL: Were you pushed into it, or was it something you wanted to do on your own?

BJ: I don't know. I think it was a little of both. My parents wanted my time to be occupied, and music seemed like the most natural thing that came to me.

LL: You were the youngest child?

BJ: Yeah.

LL: Of how many?

BJ: Six. There were a lot of musical influences in the house. My brother Alan was born in 1950, and was 18 years old in 1968, so obviously I was going to hear a lot of Beatles floating around the house. And I was listening to a lot of heavy metal music, trying to learn how to play the guitar.

LL: What were some of your favorite metal bands?

BJ: I liked AC/DC a lot. I liked Van Halen. The other night when we saw that band Red Planet, I think I was one of the only people there who knew that cover song they did, something off "Fair Warning." Meanwhile, my sister was into more artsy stuff, anything from Bruce Springsteen to REM to the Replacements, and I think that became the biggest influence on me, that helped me to bridge that gap from heavy metal to punk.

LL: But you listened to metal before punk?

BJ: Yeah.

LL: Would you call yourself a heshier at that time?

BJ: I don't know. I think I had more diverse tastes. I was more like a rocker, sort of a dirthead type kid. I also liked Elvis and the Beatles a lot, which at that time a lot of my friends thought was...

LL: Old people's music?

BJ: Yeah. They didn't know what that stuff was about at all. And I had an appreciation for Frank Sinatra as well, that sort of stuff was like the classics to me, whereas a lot of people thought it was just corny.

LL: Ever picture yourself doing a Frank Sinatra type thing when you get older?

BJ: I've been asked. I got asked to do a version of "Witchcraft" for the "Oceans 11" sound track — they're remaking it, you know. And I was like, "I know 'Witchcraft,' I've known it my entire life."

LL: The kind of stuff your dad played, right?

BJ: That, yeah, but also stuff like Herbie Hancock, that song "Watermelon Man..." I remember seeing this old guy that would come to my house who had this big goatee, he'd play saxophone and he had one fake leg, I think his name was Al or something like that, and he'd always be like, in this raspy old voice, "Hey, Billie, how ya doin'?"

LL: So this was not like some conventional suburban home, exactly?

BJ: No. It's weird, because my parents are kind of conventional people. But my parents were also a lot older than other people's parents. I remember my dad was like 50 when I was really young, when my friends' parents were like 30. So maybe that's why there was a lot of jazz and country music floating around the house.

LL: Was it mainly about music, or were they old school bohemians or beatniks?

BJ: They were pretty conventional socially and morally. But they had different tastes. There were some things that were pretty cool about it. My mom would talk about how back in the 50s they would work all week so they could go out and buy the nicest clothes and then go to the Melody Club on the weekends. I think that's kind of cool, in a way. My dad looked really sharp all the time, always had good suits and stuff, and he couldn't even afford it.

LL: Yeah, I was going to say, with six kids there couldn't have been a lot of money floating around the house.

BJ: No. But that was much earlier. By the time I was growing up in the 70s, my dad was spending a lot of time on picket lines. He was a Teamster, driving trucks for Safeway, and it seemed like he was on strike, holding signs up in front of Safeway every other month.

LL: Was it just basic labor union kind of stuff, or was he political in a larger sense?

BJ: No, he wasn't political at all. It was more like union, working class guys trying to get their due.

LL: So there must have been some hard times.

BJ: Yeah, a lot of my friends lived with their parents up to their late 20s, and I don't think there's anything wrong with that. If you look at it, they have a solid background where their parents care about them and all, but I was out of the house by the time I was 17. And I'm kind of thankful for that now, because in a weird way it probably turned me into an over-achiever. I felt I had to fight more for the things I wanted. And watching my mom work so much, too, I think, affected my way of looking at this band, the ethics of working with it.

LL: With your dad being in and out of work all the time, I guess a lot of the

financial burden fell on your mom.

BJ: Oh yeah. I rarely saw my mom because she was working graveyard shifts at a 24-hour diner. It was hard on her, but she had to do it. One thing I'm grateful for is that I'm able to take care of her more now. It wasn't easy back then. There was a lot of yelling and stuff that went on in the house. My mom was so...you know, she had to work a lot, so she sort of left the teenagers to take care of the home.

LL: You touch on that subject in one of your more famous lines, where your mom says to get a job, but "she don't like the one she's got..."

BJ: Yeah. Sometimes I feel bad for that line.

LL: It was kind of touching, I thought. You could picture her trudging home from a really hard shift and looking at a whole houseful of responsibilities and kids. You got the feeling life hadn't treated her all that well.

BJ: Yeah. She...there's one thing I have to say about my mom, that she's a survivor. She's been through a lot, she's been through a lot of husbands, she's been through dead husbands, and to this day she still wants to work. She still works as a waitress. She could quit any time she wants, but it's part of her life. Every place she worked at, those customers ended up going along with her to other restaurants. Some of these customers, she's had for like 40 years. It's pretty cool, in a way. It's kind of funny how her hard work turned into her social life at the same time. She started writing, said she was going to write a book about how to be a good waitress, and I thought that was the coolest idea. She never really followed through with it, though. I think she's pretty self-conscious about anything that has to do with being smart, because she had to quit school to take care of her family.

LL: Speaking of leaving school, how far did you get in school?

BJ: I got to the middle of 12th grade. And then quit.

LL: So you never graduated from high school? You're not a very good advertisement for the value of education?

BJ: I want to go back to school.

LL: Back to high school?

BJ: Well, I'll probably want to get my GED.

LL: You think you could pass it now?

BJ: I think so. I hope so.

LL: What happens if your own kids get to 11th or 12th grade and start arguing, "Well, you didn't graduate high school and you did all right, why should I?" I guess you could always fall back on the old standby of, "Because I said so, and I'm your dad." Anyway, were you one of those kids who just showed up for class but didn't really pay that much attention?

BJ: I have a way of not paying attention some times.

LL: Had you gotten much out of school, or were you getting passed through the years just because you were there?

BJ: I think I just wasn't into it. I probably could have done the work if I'd applied myself, but I just was not interested at all.

LL: What were you interested in then?

BJ: I was interested in the punk scene at that point. I was learning so much more by going to Gilman Street and hearing the songs...either the personal ones or the political ones. I talked to Aaron Elliott [ed. note: a/k/a writer/zine publisher Aaron Cometbus] about this once, and he was of the opinion that not only can people work out their aggressions through punk rock, but they can become really educated on top of that. Going to Gilman, and seeing how militant the politics were about racism and sexism, that was the first time I'd thought about some of that stuff.

LL: How do you account for the fact that some people seem to get dumber through punk whereas others get smarter?

BJ: I think you can get really dumb by becoming jaded. I don't know. I've seen a lot of my friends get dumber. For example, I think Lucky Dog [ed. note: former bassist for the group Fifteen, now deceased] got really dumb.

LL: That's the kind of thing I was thinking about, not him in particular, but after the East Bay pop-punk scene got big, there seemed to be this reaction against it, where the old school punks were saying, "I'm not going to sing nice songs, I'm going to be really hardcore, dirty and nasty, I'm gonna do hard drugs and be miserable," and that seemed to become the new ruling ethos of the East Bay scene. A lot of our friends went down that way, and some of them didn't

come back. What do you think accounts for that?

BJ: Like you said, a lot of people were reacting to what happened with us. The funny thing was, everything we were doing, we were being heartfelt about it, we were singing love songs because that's what we felt like. That's what was in my heart. And I think that that creeps people out a little bit. Vulnerability really creeps people out. I had friends who were really into my band, not just musically, but on a friendship level too, and when things started happening for us, they changed. They started acting more distant. Of course, there were always a lot of hardcore bands, I mean we were one of the only bands who were that poppy at that time, besides maybe Sweet Baby and the Mr. T Experience.

LL: And Sewer Trout?

BJ: Yeah, and maybe even Crimpshrine. A song like "Pretty Mess" is a really heartfelt song.

LL: Oh yeah, that's what really made them, in my opinion, the way that despite the slightly crusty overtones, they spoke and sang from the heart.

BJ: Yeah, totally. I think there was a problem with drugs coming into the scene. People were getting heavily into speed, and then graduated from that and started getting into heroin. It was a really ugly time. I have to say that I indulged in that scene myself at one time, but something scary was happening. My friends were showing signs that this was not just a party anymore, this wasn't just experimenting, this was a full-on lifestyle and they were going to take it to the bitter end. People started turning into just, kind of skeletons. They were walking dead people. And you know, I had responsibilities. I had two kids. I couldn't afford to turn into that.

LL: But it's usually people like you who are expected to turn into drug burnouts. You've got the money and the free time; you could just hang out and do drugs all day, and yet you made the choice not to. A lot of the people we're talking about, some of our old friends, they're barely getting by, it's a hard enough struggle for them to survive, let alone take on the burden of being a junkie. Whereas other people at the street level of the punk scene kept on working and growing. What do you think accounts for such different things coming out of what was once all the same scene?

BJ: You know, I don't really know. I think a lot of drug dealers started noticing what was going on at the time.

LL: Yeah, but drug dealers can't make somebody buy their stuff if they don't want to. You brought up Lucky Dog, and I was thinking back when he wrote a letter to *Lookout* zine when he was still in high school, something like 1987. And he was this fun-loving, goofy, kid. It was kind of a silly letter, but he was writing about his band, No Dogs.

BJ: Which I tried out for. They didn't want me!

LL: And it was just so sad to see him get really bitter and self-destructive over the years.

BJ: Yeah, he was also politically active, he was doing collage art, sort of Reagan-era protest art. A lot of people from that scene were really smart, and vital. I don't know, Lucky just had one of those personalities where he was getting addicted. Drugs to some people just become a disease after a while. I think it just ate away at him.

LL: How close did you come to getting addicted to drugs?

BJ: I think I was addicted to partying a little bit, but the older I got, the more I realized that I couldn't handle drugs. Because what people get addicted to is not only the high, but the low. They're into the low. But I can barely handle it when I'm coming down from coffee.

LL: You get depressed?

BJ: No, I just feel terrible. If I drink a really strong cup of coffee, after a while, I'm like, ewww, I feel like vomiting. OK, occasionally I get a little stupid, and want to go out and pretend I'm still 21, but then I end up feeling like shit the next day. I think I learned from my hangovers that this isn't as fun as it once was.

LL: Your fourth album, "Insomniac," seems to be riddled with drug influences or references. Maybe it's just me reading something into it, but it really felt like that. It was probably your darkest album, and you mentioned amphetamine directly in one of the songs.

BJ: Yeah. That was during the time when I saw a lot of my friends going down that route, doing dope. It was just scary. At the same time, I indulged here and there. I was even on drugs when I wrote some of those songs. It was a rough time for me, but I'm lucky enough to be one of the peo-

ple who learned from that experience and moved on, whereas other people just got addicted and more addicted and more addicted until it killed them.

LL: It didn't sound like a happy record. That always made me wonder, because by rights it should have been one of the best times in your life. You'd just become international superstars, sold 10 or 20 million records. All your dreams had come true, and then you come out with this dark and brooding album that sounds like, "Oh my god, I don't know if I even want to go on..."

BJ: At the time I think I was really worried about what people thought of me, because there was so much of a backlash against us. Thinking back, I sometimes feel I should have just taken more time to look for myself, and to spend with my new baby and my wife. I should have taken that time and reflected a little more. But I was reacting so much to things that were happening around me. I was really confused. I'd been married for a little over a year, a lot of people were acting really strange around me, I wasn't a guy who was just part of the crowd anymore. Even the people who were closest to me, it seemed like they didn't know how to act around me. Friends were telling me things like, "Well, I don't want to bother you..." That's part of why I wasn't seeing so much of my friends anymore. Suddenly I just felt alone, and I got really self-conscious about the mainstream acceptance of my band. People didn't hesitate to tell me I was doing the wrong thing, and I thought, holy shit, all I was doing was living up to my potential as a musician.

LL: Could you give me an example of somebody who had you convinced you were doing the wrong thing, or someone who was doing a good job trying to convince you of that?

BJ: It was a lot of people. At the same time, my tastes were getting more into harder-sounding music. It felt like such a bleak time. But for example, the things that *Maximum Rocknroll* was saying, sort of leaking over into what the people from *Spin* magazine were saying, to what the people at *Rolling Stone* were saying. This sort of crunch started happening. I never really hid the fact that it bothered me, and I think it really came out, and I reacted to it. And it came across in the music.

LL: Did you feel you had something to prove then, that you were going to make an album that was more "diffi-



cult,” not as poppy and accessible?

BJ: Even though I think there are a lot of those aspects to that record, it's still very poppy.

LL: Sure, but not by comparison with the earlier records.

BJ: Yeah. I think I was just lost. I couldn't find the strength to convince myself that what I was doing was a good thing. I was in a band that was huge because it was supposed to be huge, because our songs were that good. I couldn't ever feel like I was doing the right thing, because it felt like I was making so many people angry. That's where I got so confused, and it became really stupid. I would never want to live that part of my life over again. Ever.

LL: The years when you made all sorts of money and were internationally famous, being mobbed wherever you went? That sounds like every kid's dream.

BJ: And had a child, and had married the girl of my dreams.

LL: So all of this great stuff was happening to you, and yet you say you'd never want to live it over again!

BJ: Well, let's just say I wouldn't want to react that way. I was too afraid that I might not be doing the right thing. A lot of that anger, well that was a disguise. What was really happening was that I was scared, and that I was really sad that I couldn't go back to where I came from.

LL: Like that song "86": "There's no return..."

BJ: Yeah. People say that was a dark and angry period for me, but what was really happening was that I was sad, really sad. But the good thing was that I was able to work it out. And I had a lot to work out. Hell, I was like 24 years old.

LL: A difficult age.

BJ: Yeah. I remember that Shane from Dead and Gone was going through a similar period, and one day he said, "What are we doing, man? We're not kids anymore. We can't live our lives like this forever." He was referring to everybody living with each other, having these sort of "punk houses."

LL: Did you ever feel like asking, "Why not?"

BJ: Um, no. Because at the time I was really freaked out, and I was asking myself, "Yeah, what *are* we doing?"

LL: I guess I was thinking of that 7 Seconds song, "Young Until I Die." That's at least one part of the punk ideal, isn't it? Refusing to grow up?

BJ: What I kind of realized is that it's okay to grow up, it's just slowing down that's the scary part. Running out of time. It's okay to grow up, but it doesn't mean you have to become like your parents.

LL: I'd like to ask you about your relationship with your first drummer, Al Sobrante (a/k/a John Kiffmeyer). He was an original member of the band, but left in 1990. Were there ruffled feelings on either side about that? It seemed like he wasn't that supportive of the band once you started getting successful.

BJ: Well, for one thing, I didn't even hear from him that he was leaving the band. I heard it from someone else, in passing during a conversation.

LL: Really?

BJ: Yeah. Me and Aaron Elliott were walking around in Benicia with a couple of girls — remember Stacy and Mitchell? — and Stacy was saying, "Yeah, everybody's leaving town this summer, going away to college, etc.," and then she mentioned that John was going away to college, too. And I said, "John's leaving? What do you mean, John's leaving?" And Aaron looked at me and said, "Oh man, he didn't tell you, did he?" And I said, "No, he didn't tell me. Where the fuck is he going?" That's how I found out. And I was hurt. It blew me away. One, because I had to hear it from someone else, but also because, yeah, he was a big influence on us. We were so young, and he's a really smart person. We learned a lot from him. He was already a veteran of the scene with Isocracy. He knew so much, and he worked really hard. But I think he's one of those guys who got really self-conscious about the kind of music we were playing. And he was talking to the guys in Brent's TV about being in a band with them up in Humboldt. That was sort of behind our back, which was really weird. We're the kind of people who have the attitude, "Look, if you wanna leave, then leave." Just be upfront about it, and don't bullshit me. It was hard. I didn't even know if I wanted Green Day to go on after John quit. I was really confused.

LL: This would be not too long after your first album had come out, and you hadn't even gone on your first big tour yet, which wasn't till that summer.

BJ: And I had quit school. There were a lot of things going on in my life, too.

LL: That was the year you quit school? So even though you weren't sure if you wanted the band to go on, it sounds like the band was the main thing you had going for you.

BJ: Yeah, but we were really confused, we didn't know what to do. We were angry, and we didn't want him to leave. We were writing new songs, and the songs were getting better.

LL: Which songs?

BJ: Like the songs that were on the "Slappy" EP, songs like "409" and "Paper Lanterns" and "Why Do You Want Him?" We felt like we were moving, like we were coming into our own.

LL: You were starting to get a lot of fans, too, at least on the grass roots, underground punk scene level.

BJ: Yeah. And John was responsible for a lot of that, since he handled booking the shows and all that. And it was a time when we weren't feeling so self-conscious anymore, when we were getting more respect from the punk scene. And then he upped and split. That guy had the worst communication skills.

LL: I remember him speaking to me about it at the time, and I had no idea that he hadn't told you. My impression was, from the way he put it, he needed to have this experience of going away to college, it was a part of growing up and something he really wanted to do. But I also got the impression that he expected you guys to put the band on hold while he went to college. Did you have the same impression?

BJ: Yeah, I did, but we were way too young and full of energy to want to wait six months or a year for someone to play gigs. At the age of 18, that's like half a lifetime. We didn't want to wait. At the same time, I had this romantic notion in my head about how the gang doesn't split up, and a band never splits up. I didn't want to look for a new member, it was too cheesy, too lame.

LL: It seems like there was a difference separating you and Mike from John, in terms of background and expectations. He came from a more middle class family. Do you think because of that, the band thing was less serious to him, more of a game, something he could pick up and put

down, while you guys were more like, "This band is all we've got..."?

BJ: Yeah. The thing is, my education was music. I knew I'd be playing music no matter what. That's all I thought about, I was obsessed with it. I'm still obsessed with it. It gets the best of me sometimes.

LL: You mentioned earlier that seeing how your mom had to struggle, coupled with the kind of background you had, made you into a bit of a workaholic. An "over-achiever," you called it. I'm getting the impression that John just wasn't that bothered.

BJ: John had options. He had opportunities, like being able to go to school. And I don't have anything against that, but I didn't want to feel like anybody's side project. And that's the way I was starting to feel when John left. Because we even tried to do the part-time thing. But then we started playing with Tre, and John would come down from Humboldt and sort of steal the gig away. Like there was this big gig with Bad Religion — we were opening for them at the Phoenix Theater in Petaluma — and John came down and suddenly took the gig away from Tre. And I thought, wait a minute, Tre has been working with us for months, and you come down to play this one gig. That doesn't seem fair to Tre, who by then was becoming a

good friend of ours. That was one of my biggest regrets about Tre. I'm sure he'll never say that it bothered him, but it was a pretty awful thing that we did, letting John play that last big gig. I don't think he deserved to play that gig, because at that point it felt more like he was just showing off and being the loudmouth from Humboldt. I was hearing stories from Humboldt about how all he'd talk about was that stupid fucking first tour. People were telling me, "Man, that ex-drummer of yours is a nut."

LL: Looking back, and supposing John had decided to stay in the band, do you think he would have been up to the kind of stuff you went on to do? Or did it work out better in the long run?

BJ: Well, I think he would have kept on handling the business aspects. Because

after he left, no one handled the business part.

LL: Yeah, but I was also thinking in terms of playing drums.

BJ: Um, I don't know. At the time I had no intentions of ever throwing him out.

LL: Do you think Green Day could have gotten as big with him on drums?

BJ: No. I don't think we would have. I

I think eventually [John Kiffmeyer] would have been doing infomercials for people anyway, and that would have been his main priority, so whatever.

think eventually we would have burned out, probably around the "Kerplunk" days.

LL: Because of his musical skills or because of his attitude?

BJ: Because of his attitude. Me and Mike got more stubborn as we got older, too. I don't think we would have kept thinking some of his goofy ideas were cool.

LL: What sort of goofy ideas?

BJ: Oh, I don't know. I think eventually he would have been doing infomercials for people anyway, and that would have been his main priority, so whatever.

LL: What difference did it make when Tre joined? One thing I can think of is that instead of being a couple years older, he was the same age as you. Was he more or less on the same wavelength as you?

BJ: Yeah. And he was more of a musician. He was a lot like us, he was...

LL: A guy who smoked a lot of pot?

BJ: Yeah, there was that. And when he entered the band, it was weird, because we were sort of these nice guys who would stay at people's houses on tour, and we had a really good rep because John kind of portrayed us that way.

LL: Sort of like the Beatles, the way they were supposed to be these nice, well-dressed young men, as opposed to those bad, foul-mouthed Rolling Stones? And John was your Brian Epstein?

BJ: Yeah. And then when Tre joined, it was suddenly like Mick Jagger was on drums.

LL: Mick Jagger or Keith Moon, or a combination of the two.

BJ: So we traded in one lunatic for...

LL: A totally different kind of lunatic!

BJ: Exactly.

LL: Having played in a band with Tre for five years before he joined Green Day, I know what you're talking about. But during the time he was with us, he wasn't fully grown, and

you could still at least occasionally tell him what to do. From what I've seen, he's gotten even more demented since then. But he's also a brilliant drummer.

BJ: He's an amazing drummer. I think he's the best drummer in rock music, period. He has his own sort of style, and he doesn't look like every other drummer that's playing. At the same time, he embodies the drummer persona...

LL: The kind you have to keep chained up in the basement until it's time for the gig?

BJ: Yeah, he really is that guy. He doesn't have to try to be, he just is. He's got this deranged sense of humor, which in the long run I think has made us a cooler band. It was hard at first, because I was still sort of stuck on John being in the band. I can remember the gig — it was one

of the rare times we played in San Francisco in those days — when we realized we sounded really good, and we decided Tre was now our full time drummer.

LL: So if John never told you officially that he was leaving the band, did you ever tell him officially that he was out and that Tre was replacing him?

BJ: No, I don't think I ever did.

LL: You returned the favor, in other words?

BJ: Yeah. Then I found out he was playing with the Ne'er Do Wells anyway, who he'd been sort of moonlighting with for a while. He really wanted to play sissy college boy music.

LL: Once it had sunk in with him that he was no longer in the band, did he respond to you in any particular way?

BJ: He always wanted me to feel like, "Oh, the best years are behind you," the real Green Day years. At the same time, we were touring our asses off. And it was a great feeling, because we ended up playing with the Ne'er Do Wells, and he knew we were standing there watching. He was playing really hard, and trying to make it look like he was the man, and one thing you can not do to Tre Cool is to outdrum him. Especially if you are a mediocre drummer at best. One of the first songs we played was "Longview," which is like a great drummer's song, and from that point on, it was like "Dude, you're so over." It was weird, because he always wanted to make it look like our best years were when he was in the band, and that they were behind us now. And we were thinking, "no, they're not. And we're going to keep writing better songs, and keep making better records."

LL: I take it he wasn't very supportive when you started getting a lot bigger?

BJ: He was just kind of cynical about it. He never said to my face what he thought, but I started hearing things, as though he was going around telling people, "They're ruining everything I did." But we were thinking, "Dude, you did...nothing. I told you how to play drums. I taught you how to play those parts."

LL: I didn't mean to turn this into a whole John-trashing thing.

BJ: He deserves it sometimes.

LL: Yeah, sometimes. I think almost everyone who knows him has bumped heads with at one time or another. But I guess I was thinking more about how he might have represented the old school scenesters who copped an attitude toward you guys when you started getting big.

BJ: If "trust fund punk" was in the dictionary, there'd be a picture of John.

LL: I'm not just talking about John anymore, though. How much of the hostility you've encountered within the punk scene has been due to jealousy or misunderstanding, and how much to the fact that people wanted to keep their scene small and private?

BJ: I think to someone like Aaron Elliott, or maybe someone like Jeff Bale, it does make sense to keep it an underground thing. And I think there definitely should be an underground scene, there always should be. Punk rock isn't supposed to be for everyone. There is that sort of private club mentality, which is necessary. It keeps things from getting watered down and boring. But there was also a lot of jealousy and resentment towards us. A band like All, for example, were insanely jealous that...

LL: You had melodies and they didn't?

BJ: Yeah, that too.

LL: You'd already seen Operation Ivy go through some of the same stuff, hadn't you? As soon as they started getting popular, people would...

BJ: ...call them ska-boys!

LL: Yeah, and heckle them.

BJ: But it never affected Jesse Michaels. I mean, I guess it did, but he was so great on stage, so charismatic, good looking, with insanely great lyrics. That's what I was into about him. And I always thought he had that sort of sensibility, that he could work both sides of the fence, the people who were into him because they had great music, and the people who were into them because of the things they stood for.

LL: Why do you reckon he pulled the plug, then?

BJ: I don't know. That's a wild mind he's got there. I think only the people closest to Jesse could tell what was going on with that.

LL: Yeah, because who knows what

they could have gone on to? They were the ones back in the early Gilman days that everyone picked as the most likely to become big stars out of the East Bay.

BJ: I don't think it had to do with...I don't think he was afraid of success, which a lot of people claimed. I think there was stuff going on internally in that band which made it so that they couldn't get along with each other anymore.

LL: Tim and Matt came to see me the night Jesse quit, and they were genuinely shocked, shocked and hurt, kind of the way you describe feeling when you heard John was leaving your band. This idea of, "How can he do this, why is he doing this?" Music was their whole life, too. Let me try and relate this to some of my own experiences. When Lookout Records was starting to get big, I remember lying awake all night sometimes, with all these questions going through my head. This idea of, hey, this might go on to be something way beyond the punk scene, and do I want that? It's going to change everything. Because at the time Gilman was almost like a family. You'd walk in there, it's like walking into your rec room and seeing all your friends. Everybody knows you.

BJ: Like "Cheers."

LL: Yeah, except without beer. That was outside. But I was thinking, yeah, these bands I like are going to get their music heard, and that's cool, yet at the same time so much of the scene that produced those bands is going to get wiped out. And I'm asking myself, should I do it, should I go ahead with it? Did you ever have that feeling? Like, if you keep getting bigger, you're going to shine this great big floodlight on Gilman Street, and the whole world will see it and come rushing in?

BJ: Yeah. But inevitably, it's like we're responsible for ourselves. We did belong to that club, but the songs belonged to Green Day. It's our music and it's our lives. It doesn't have to do with shining spotlights on anybody. If people want to come along and hang on to our coattails, then fine. But we didn't ask anything from anybody, we didn't use anybody as a stepping stone to anything.

LL: You were a musician before you were a punk.

BJ: Yeah, and even though we liked to



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hang out in the scene, we didn't run the scene. We were one band out of many, and we decided to try and take it a step further. It had nothing to do with anybody else, and that's what killed me, that here's these people who are like declaring ownership of my life. And I'm like, it doesn't apply to you at all. What I choose to do with my music is my prerogative, as Bobby Brown would say.

LL: In the early years, Green Day was mostly about sweet love songs, almost Beatles-esque kind of songs. You guys never even swore in your lyrics. After you supposedly "sold out," people were like, "Oh, they came out of the punk scene," and yet you were the most unlikely punks. It wasn't till after you were big that you started swearing and spitting and doing a lot of the stuff that's commonly thought of as "punk."

BJ: We got into playing music at such a young age. When John joined the band, I was 15 or 16 years old. People were watching us grow up, literally. If you look at those records, we were growing up in front of people's eyes. A lot of people don't ever get into punk rock music until they're 21 years old; by the time I got into really serious hardcore punk rock music, I'd already been in a band for six years.

LL: You and Mike had been trying to get a band going for years already before you hooked up with John, right?

BJ: Yeah, we'd always played together, me and Mike had played together since we were ten.

LL: How long had you been playing guitar before you started playing with Mike?

BJ: Off and on since I was eight.

LL: So it was more a case of an already established musician finding a really cool social scene, not like you came to the punk scene because you hated society and wanted to pierce your nose and break bottles?

BJ: Well, by the time that was looked at as sort of a cliché anyway.

LL: Gilman was kind of rebellion against the old clichés of what punk was supposed to be. It was more about building stuff.

BJ: Yeah, that's what it was about. And it was a place to feel accepted for more reasons than just being punk.

LL: It was for all the misfits that nobody would hang out with anywhere else.

BJ: And of course a place to use as a stepping stone to major label success. (laughs)

LL: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that part.

BJ: Seriously, I remember right before "Dookie" came out, Pinhead Gunpowder decided to do a tour. And I wanted to experience as much from that tour as I could. We played Olympia — Olympia had a really great scene at that time — and we were playing at the Lucky 7 house, and I just wanted to experience as much out of that as I could, because I felt like there was no turning back, that anything could happen. It was a crapshoot. And it was scary, thinking about what might be ahead. There was the punk scene, and what might happen to the punk scene, but at the same time, I was thinking about what the fuck is going to happen to my life.

LL: At that time you were already more or less making a living from your music?

BJ: Yeah.

LL: I heard when you left on your first big tour to promote "Dookie," that you left your house on Ashby and didn't even move out. You just sort of walked away from it and never came back. Is that true?

BJ: Yeah. Well, all I had...I was sleeping on someone else's mattress at the time. It was someone else's room before mine. I put my clothes in a garbage bag, grabbed my guitar and my four-track, and I left. I think some people ended up squatting the place after that.

LL: I heard that the punks came in and looted it as well. Had you guys intended not to come back? Like, we're going to conquer the world and we'll come back on top or not at all?

BJ: Well, I was living really close to Telegraph Avenue, too, so I just knew things could get kind of uncomfortable.

LL: Oh, I thought you were thinking, well, it's close to Telegraph anyway; if this rock star thing doesn't work out, I can just come back to Telegraph and live on the sidewalk. (laughs)

BJ: It really was that black and white.

LL: Seriously, what do you think would have happened to you if "Dookie" had flopped?

BJ: I'd still be playing music.

LL: On a street corner?

BJ: No, I think eventually we would have found our way back somehow. I mean, after all our success, we found our way back. I would have ended up playing music, since that's what I was meant to do. That's what I'd done my whole life up until that point anyway. I would have never stopped. I would have always kept writing songs. It wasn't like a make-or-break situation. It was a part of my life.

LL: Somebody who's always going to play music is one thing, somebody who's going to earn their living and support their family from it is another. When did it first sink in that you could be fully confident in your ability to make your way in the world solely through playing music?

BJ: Probably when I was about 13.

LL: Seriously?

BJ: Yeah.

LL: Even though you admit to being nervous and scared years later?

BJ: Yeah.

LL: But you say you *knew* you could make it as a professional musician at age 13, and yet at 20 you were still scared half to death about what you were going to do for a living?

BJ: Well, there's a lot of fear that creeps in the older that you get.

LL: At least you had your dad as a role model. There was a guy who always brought in at least some money from playing music.

BJ: Yeah, there's that. And I look at someone like Blake, who's in Jets To Brazil. He was in Jawbreaker, and they went on to a major label, and basically everything they did was along the same lines as us, same manager, same producer, same guy that did a video for them. But even though it didn't work out as well for Jawbreaker as it did for us, he went on to get Jets To Brazil together. If you're a musician, you can't just walk away from it. Unless, of course, you're going away to college. (laughs)

LL: So at some level or another...

BJ: Exactly. I would have ended up in Jets To Brazil eventually.

LL: Who would get to be lead singer then?

BJ: I'd probably be bass player.

LL: Speaking of bass players, you've

been teamed up with Mike practically forever. How much of a team is that? What would it be like if there were no Mike?

BJ: It wouldn't have happened. Period. There would have been no such thing as Green Day.

LL: I'm thinking especially of the trademark harmonies that tell you instantly that you're listening to Green Day.

BJ: It's more than that. Mike and I really influenced each other. That's the thing that bummed me out about that VH1 *Behind The Music* show, that they barely talked about the connection we've had for so many years, how we've always been a team, how it's always been "Billie and Mike." When we first started hanging out in the scene, if I was ever by myself, people would come and ask, "Hey, where's Mike?" And likewise with Mike. When he was 16 he ended up moving into my mom's house because his mom moved to Louisiana to avoid earthquakes. I give more credit to him than I would to anybody for the success of Green Day.

LL: A lot of people who aren't musicians don't understand how vital the rhythm section is. In fact they're not always that clear on what exactly it is that bass players do, whereas musicians know that without a really great bassist and drummer, even the best guitarist or singer in the world is still going to sound like crap. But I was wondering: wasn't it a bit hard on Mike when so much of the attention went your way because of your being the lead singer?

BJ: In the long run, I don't care what people think about that. That's been an issue ever since pop music began.

LL: It's just that some bands seem to be able to deal with it and others don't.

BJ: I think that even if it did bother Mike, he wouldn't tell me. But ultimately it takes three members to make this band, and we all know that. Fortunately, we're one of those bands that people look at as a band, not a guy and his two sidekicks. From early on we were adamant about

how every member of this band has an opinion, his input, and is equal. Even the way we get paid.

LL: Is it true you divide everything three ways? That's sort of the old school punk way, isn't it?

BJ: Well, if it wasn't for Mike and Tre, I wouldn't be where I'm at right now, and if it wasn't for me and Tre, Mike wouldn't be where he's at. And so on. We're a band, that's the way it works.

LL: What do you think about all the

We didn't try to imitate what Filth or Blatz were doing, or even what the Mr. T Experience were doing.

pseudo- Green Days that have sprung up in the wake of your success? Some of them have gone on to be nearly as big as you guys.

BJ: I don't know that much about them. In a way it's cool to have bands that imitate you. People eventually go to the source anyway. Are you talking about groups like Blink 182?

LL: That name might have been lingering in the back of my mind.

BJ: I think it's cool. I don't think they have quite the same background we did. We were one band out of several bands, out of a scene, that sounded completely different from each other. We didn't try to imitate what Filth or Blatz were doing, or even what the Mr. T Experience were doing. We were never the typical "Beach Blanket Bingo" punk style, which is what has happened to a lot of those bands that came after us. But for the most part, I think it's cool, and if any band says they're influenced by us, I'm totally flattered.

LL: A lot of the new stuff sounds like pop punk in a can, doesn't it? And spread on bread with a lot of cheese?

BJ: Outside of a couple of bands, yeah,

that's true. It's like Disney punk or something.

LL: Who would you give props to, then?

BJ: I like the Get Up Kids, I like Dillinger Four a lot, I've think they've definitely taken things into a new dimension. Jimmy Eat World. There are a lot of bands that have taken a DC influence into writing melodic punk rock songs, adding new elements to it.

LL: You don't think bands like Blink 182 are?

BJ: No, not really. Anyway, I never thought of Blink 182 as sounding like us. I think they're more influenced by NOFX.

LL: What about the other band that broke big from the underground at the same time you did, the Offspring?

BJ: I never thought that there was anything remotely similar in our bands.

LL: I wasn't thinking so much of a similarity in sound, but that both bands came out of a similar scene. I remember seeing them at Gilman not too long before "Dookie" came out and they were playing for around 12 people. Then I was away in England for a while, and when I came back, I exclaimed, "Isn't that amazing, Green Day have a gold record!" And people were saying, "That's not all, there's also the Offspring." I was astonished.

BJ: I remember around the time that their first record was out, they were looking around for a label, and they were asking us about Lookout.

LL: Yeah, there was talk about that. If I'd been more aggressive and "businesslike," I might have ended up with not only Green Day, but Rancid and the Offspring all on the same label. And I probably would have had like 50 ulcers and a brain tumor by now, but oh well.

BJ: Yeah, I remember seeing those guys play years ago too. Their guitar player,

Noodles, his amplifier was basically like a tin can. They definitely came from the lowest up to the highest.

LL: I'm remembering one of those all-day Gilman fests where both Green Day and the Offspring played under the Lookouts, and I'm thinking, where the hell did I go wrong?

BJ: Maybe the Potatomen will become huge.

LL: Yeah, there's still another century in which that could happen! Anyway, since the big punk rock explosion that you guys helped spearhead, much of the excitement has died down. Bands aren't selling as many records as they used to, people are saying, "Well, I guess punk had its day and now it's over." Of course they said that back in 1979 too. I'm wondering, though, do you think rock and roll itself may be near the end of its run? Say, in the way that jazz dominated the first half of the 20th century before giving way to rock and roll? Do you think rock and roll has maybe had its day now too, and is going to be replaced by something like rap or dance as the music of choice among most young people?

BJ: I think it always gone in cycles. But the difference this time is that it doesn't show any great signs of coming back. That's the scary thing. Right now there's so much crap on the radio, everything from rap-metal to generic hip hop to Britney Spears type pop. There's always been an element of crap to music, but now there are so many people buying it. Record sales are bigger than ever for some kinds of music.

LL: But not guitar rock.

BJ: Yeah, not guitar rock. I think some of it will come back, but it won't necessarily be punk rock. Things were really bleak right before Nirvana came along.

LL: That's always been my theory, that things are most likely to happen when everything else sounds like crap. It was a big part of my thinking when I started the record label: I hated everything I heard on the radio, so I figured if I wanted any decent records to listen to, I'd have to make them myself.

BJ: Well, that's where all good music comes from, I think. Anything that's likely to have an impact on pop culture comes from a point where there's no expectation of it becoming anything other than personal.

LL: Speaking of pop culture, what's your place in it? Are you going to go down in history?

BJ: I dunno. (laughs) We'll go down, regardless. Seriously, I try not to think about that. I'm not ready to be classified or categorized just yet. That's the thing with a lot of these so-called "old school" bands. They don't get much respect or attention until they're way past their prime and have become harmless. They say, "I was playing punk rock when you were still in diapers, blah blah blah..." Well, the difference is, they're harmless now, so it's OK for people to accept them and even make up stories or over-romanticize how cool they were back in the day. So I don't want to rest right now. I'm not ready to be too accepted, because that means we're not really a threat anymore.

LL: Speaking of threats, your last record is called "Warning." What's that about? What do you want to warn us about? What do you want to threaten?

BJ: For us, it was about people still raising this argument about whether or not we're a punk band. Seven years on and people are still arguing about that.

LL: More like 13 years, really. I remember when you first wanted to play Gilman in 1988 and Tim Yohannan said no, you can't, you're not punk, you're a pop band.

BJ: Yeah, well, as long as they're still arguing about you. It's like people arguing about whether Elvis was a truly original rock and roller or he just ripped off black rhythm and blues artists. As long as people are still talking and arguing about you, you're still some kind of threat.

LL: So you haven't become background music just yet?

BJ: No, I don't think so.

LL: Which prompts me to ask: have you heard any of your songs turned in shopping mall muzak yet?

BJ: No, the closest thing I heard was something called the "Moog Cookbook," where these guys did our songs on Moog keyboards. It was pretty awful. And pretty funny.

LL: I heard a string version of "Anarchy In The UK" in a supermarket once.

BJ: Talk about old and harmless and not threatening.

LL: You're talking about the Sex

Pistols?

BJ: Yeah, I am.

LL: Do you think they were among the more overrated bands of their time?

BJ: Um, I don't know. I wasn't really there.

LL: Good point. But as young as were then, you're not a kid anymore now. You've got kids of your own, you're a respectable family man, dealing with the same responsibilities that millions of other husbands and parents do. At the same time, "mature" or "grown up" almost seems like a contradiction in terms when you combine it with "punk rock." Many of your songs are anthems of teenage rebellion, and yet you're trying to raise kids of your own. How do you bridge the gap between those two realities?

BJ: I don't know. I've always wanted to have a family, and I guess a certain amount of rebelliousness just goes with growing up. Just because you sing songs about a certain feeling doesn't mean you have to go on feeling that way forever. You can sing about that for the rest of your life, but that doesn't mean things aren't going to change in your own life. I don't raise my kids the same way I was raised. You might grow up with a lot of anger, but what's important is how you educate yourself, what comes out of that anger, how does it apply later on in your life? How are you going to take your anger, and the knowledge that comes out of it, and turn it into something that's positive? Otherwise you just end up bitter and not wanting to have anything to do with society at all.

LL: Don't you think there are some parents out there, maybe not even that much older than you, who are afraid of you, afraid of your music and the effect it might have on their kids?

BJ: That's part of the problem with music, especially our kind of music. It's three minutes of one emotion. I'm not the kind of person who could change the way I'm thinking within a single song, so it's more about the entire body of work through the years. Then you can make more sense out of it, see how we've evolved, see how I've evolved as a human being. At this point I'm not so interested in singing a song about masturbating.

LL: But you do almost every time you go on stage.

BJ: Yeah, but I sing songs about hope, also, and about love, and about trying to have courage.

LL: That raises the question: out of all your work, is there anything you'd feel embarrassed about singing in front of your own children?

BJ: Yeah, sometimes the kids will hear a Green Day song on the radio in the car, and there's a cuss word or something that's a little suggestive, and I'll cough really loudly or turn it down a bit.

LL: That's not always going to work, especially when they get older.

BJ: They're going to get older, yeah, and they're going to have to figure some things out, especially when they get to puberty, to their teenage years, and start evolving into their own men. And a part of that is to reject your parents.

LL: So, do you think they'll be really polite young men and never swear and go around in suits and ties, and that will be their way of rebelling against you?

BJ: Well, I don't think that necessarily. I don't raise my kids in an environment that would be stereotypically punk rock. I don't sit around drinking beer and spitting and saying "fuck you" to them.

LL: You're destroying the illusions of your fans who think that you live in a squatted punk rock commune with about 37 little Spike Anarkies!

BJ: (laughs) I don't really care about that. I have to raise a family. I want my boys to be smart. And that's a part of punk rock that people don't understand as much. Like we were saying earlier, the scene at Gilman was sort of a rebellion against the old way of being "punk." It was more about building something. And I'm helping to build two young men, who I want to be smart. I can't tell them what to be in their lives, tell them that they have to play music or that they have to be punk rockers. Those decisions are part of being your own human being. But I can encourage them to be healthy.

LL: Healthy in mind and body, to paraphrase Jesse Michaels. So here's a question: all parents presumably want their kids to be smarter than

they were. How do you do that?

BJ: I think you try to create a foundation for them that they can build on. You try to establish a dialogue between parents and kids. Part of the problem with parents and kids is that they don't talk to each other.

LL: At least not about real things.

BJ: Yeah. Part of the problem, too, is that kids get their anger suppressed. They're always being told, "You're not supposed to be angry, you're not supposed to act like that." And the kids end up thinking, "oh well, if I can't talk to you about what I'm feeling, then I'm not going to talk to you at all." Instead they take it out in different areas, or on themselves. Also, you can't meddle in a kid's life too much. They have to have their own lives.

LL: If you could pick one of your songs to sing to your kids that would best sum up the idea of, "Hey, my sons, this is what I am about," is there a song of yours that could do that?

I don't think there's much difference between [rap-metal] and professional wrestling.

BJ: (long pause) Probably one of the newer ones, I would think. I'm not really sure. It's hard. Right now they're at the age where I'm still scared to death about how they're going to turn out.

LL: But let's just suppose that they were going to live their lives — like some kids do — according to a song or songs they've heard. I guess we've all done that to an extent. In that case, which of your songs would you most like them to be influenced by?

BJ: Probably a song like "Waiting." I'd say "Waiting" right now, because it's about putting your best foot forward, even if you don't have any idea what's in store for the future, about trying to make a difference in your own life, about having high goals even though you're not fully sure of what you want or where you're going to end up. You just keep moving forward and don't

give up. That's good enough for me.

LL: When your boys are a bit older, how would you feel about them being out in the pit at a really big Green Day show?

BJ: (laughs) That's cool, if they want to do that.

LL: You wouldn't worry?

BJ: I'd worry about them getting hurt.

LL: How does that feel, playing music that becomes a soundtrack for kids being really aggressive and rough, and some actually getting hurt? Do you feel like that detracts from your music, adds to it, or is just an inevitable byproduct?

BJ: Yeah, it can get really violent. We try to learn how to do crowd control. When you're dancing that hard, with that many people, people do get hurt. And you do the best you can, you tell people to look out for each other, you try to break things down a bit to let people take a breath, you throw water on them. Because some kids just lose their inhibitions, they lose them so much that they're in danger of hurting themselves or hurting others. So you just try to learn how to work a crowd the best you can. A lot of these rap metal bands, they couldn't care less, they look at violence as rebellion, they look at stupidity as rebellion, and if someone gets hurt or killed, they're thinking, well, as long as they get the publicity.

LL: You think they're that cynical?

BJ: I think they're that dumb.

LL: I take it you don't have a high opinion of most rap-metal bands?

BJ: No. I think most of it is really just testosterone-heavy. I don't think there's much difference between it and professional wrestling.

LL: Are there any particular bands of that type that you especially dislike?

BJ: There are the obvious ones like Limp Bizkit. That's just such an old mentality.

LL: You don't feel like you're being the grown-up now, complaining about this newfangled music that all the kids are listening to these days?

BJ: No, because I didn't like it when people were playing it years ago either.

LL: So it's not really even anything that new?

BJ: No. I didn't like Faith No More either. I don't think there's much sensibility about it. A pit at a rap metal show compared to a pit for say, Nirvana, when they first came out, is a completely different thing. There's a different frame of mind. Like when we played at Woodstock in '94 compared to when Limp Bizkit played there in '99 — it's funny how much times change in five short years.

LL: From mud fights to gang rapes?

BJ: Yeah. And yet a lot of these bands never even spoke out about what was happening to women there, they sort of swept it under the rug. Whereas I think with what we do, there's a lot more fun involved in it. It's not just thinking of something to break. Think about the big crowds in England, like at the Reading Festival. That crowd unites, they're singing along. They're not being wishy-washy, everyone is getting an opportunity to work out their energy, but it's not like a football game or going to see wrestling. Of course there's always been an element of fighting within some types of punk rock.

LL: What about Eminem?

BJ: I don't like his lyrics.

LL: But you've got all these intellectuals, or at least quasi-intellectuals, going, "Yeah, but he's an *artist*. We don't have the right to question his art."

BJ: I think that's bullshit. If the guy is going to stand up and sing these songs that are basically about killing gays and killing women, he's got to face the consequences. Yeah, he does have the freedom to say whatever he wants, but people also have the freedom to express a negative opinion about him. One time I was watching Melissa Etheridge on TV, and when she was asked about Eminem, she said, "oh, he's an artist." But I think people are just saying that because they're afraid to reveal their true opinions. Saying that Eminem has artistic freedom is not an answer to the question "What do you think of Eminem?" He does have artistic freedom, but doesn't everybody have artistic freedom? That's not what the question was about.

LL: Well, you're an artist. People don't hesitate to criticize you.

BJ: Yeah, they don't. But with Eminem, I

think the things that he says are bullshit. Maybe he says that they're a joke.

LL: But jokes are supposed to be funny. Actually, some of them are very funny, provided that you abandon any kind of moral sense. It's sort of like what Nietzsche said: "A joke is an epitaph on the death of feeling."

BJ: Yeah, or like people who listen to Skrewdriver because "the music sounds good, man."

LL: What would you say if, when they're older, your own kids started listening to something like Eminem?

BJ: I'd talk to them about it. As much as I could. They have minds of their own, and maybe I can't tell them what to buy or listen to, but it would raise issues. I don't think I would give them the money to buy something like that.

LL: But if they got jobs and earned their own money and went out and bought those kind of records?

BJ: What can you do? There's "parental guidance," but it only goes so far. You can try and educate them, show the history and meaning of what this guy is talking about. I don't like Eminem. Yeah, I'm 30 years old and I can distinguish between what is real and what isn't, but an 11-year old can't always do that. Joke or not, part of what Eminem is saying is that this kind of behavior is OK, that you're a man and it's part of your rite of passage or something, and that's bullshit.

LL: Some people say that the real danger is not that people take Eminem's lyrics literally, but that it desensitizes them by making horrible things into a joke, until they just don't seem as serious or as horrible anymore. And that that's why kids often seem so ready to pull a trigger or to smash somebody's head in, because it's like a cartoon to them instead of a real thing.

BJ: And it's such fake rebellion. It's testosterone-driven. It's got nothing to do with using your fucking brain, which is what rebellion is about to begin with.

LL: One thing I've thought about in terms of both metal and rap is that they're both pseudo-rebellions in another way: they both operate pretty much according to the same values that they're supposedly rebelling against. They're about acquiring lots of money and lots of power and being able to dominate women, which is

essentially already mainstream culture. They're just doing it on a somewhat cruder, more basic level. Anyway, you say you're not a big fan of Eminem; what about other rap music? It's one of the most popular kinds of music happening these days.

BJ: To tell you the truth, I don't really buy rap music. The way that it sounds, it just doesn't appeal to me. I'm sure some rap artists are saying great things, but I've just never been into that sound. I like guitars. I like bands. And I like rock and roll. I don't want to come across like a purist. I respect rap music and hip hop, but it's not something that really appeals to me.

LL: Back when Tre was in the Lookouts, he used to listen to NWA a lot. In fact we all did, and it got to the point where the three of us could pretty much recite all the lyrics, which is often how we'd entertain ourselves on the way to gigs. Some of those lyrics are pretty terrible too, I mean, what they're talking about, and yet somehow they seemed funny. I'm wondering if it's just me getting old that makes me find Eminem not as funny.

BJ: I think the difference is that NWA came from somewhere. It was part of real life, it was Compton. And they were brutally honest...

LL: You think they represented Compton the way our friends' bands represented the East Bay? I first heard NWA around the same time the whole East Bay scene was really taking off, and though on the surface you wouldn't see much in common between Compton and Berkeley, I did pick up on one similarity. We were like the ugly stepsister to glamorous San Francisco, the East Bay — hell, the Frisco snobs used to call it "East Berlin" — was more working class, more gritty, and in my mind, more real. And in the early days of Gilman, we started up this whole fake rivalry between the East Bay and the West Bay.

BJ: East Beast vs. West Beast.

LL: And they took it seriously, the Frisco people.

BJ: Well, that's because they're not as smart as we are. Seriously, San Francisco just seemed like it was in a different country to me. Occasionally we would end up playing in the city, but most of the time it was all 21 and over places. We couldn't get in ourselves, let alone play a gig there. It's

weird. Now I look at San Francisco in a different light. I appreciate it as a beautiful city. But back then the East Bay was just so happening — and to a certain extent still is — that it seemed light years away from San Francisco. And the scene was so much younger, and the energy level was so much higher. I mean, I'm *still* younger than most of those people were at that time in San Francisco.

LL: Every so often in the history of music, lightning strikes a particular part of the country. Like San Francisco had its day, even if it was almost 40 years ago. Detroit had its time, first with Motown and then with the MC5 and Stooges. Is it just like coincidence or magic? Or is there some reason that a certain community comes together at a certain time and turns out some whole new musical and cultural thing?

BJ: Shit, I don't know. At that time there were just a lot of things happening. I think it was just a coincidence, really. Gilman Street sort of solidified it. Everyone had a place to go, and play, and it was developed by people that sort of thought the same way. It's weird, all over the East Bay, even in places like Pinole and El Sobrante, there were a ton of bands. And we came from a small place like Rodeo, Isocracy from El Sobrante, No Dogs and Corrupted Morals from Pinole, Blatz is actually from Pinole.

LL: Well, the genius behind Blatz, anyway!

BJ: Jake Filth was from El Sob. There were just so many people. You can't really explain it. Or maybe you can, but we weren't up to intellectualizing about it back then. We were just having fun. It's kind of pointless to analyze it even now. The wild thing is how many people all over the world try to make something like that happen and it just doesn't work out. A month or two later it falls apart. What's amazing about Gilman is that it's been around so many years.

LL: Even longer than Green Day!

BJ: Yeah. It's unexplainable, I think. It's a magical thing. That's all you can really say about it. And it came out of nowhere.

LL: I'm thinking it didn't come out of nowhere. To me, it came out of some people that didn't have a voice before and were able to find one. Maybe that's a romantic way of looking at it. But it's what excited me about the East Bay. Which brings me to ask: you've been

successful, you could afford to live anywhere you wanted. But you're still here in the heart of the East Bay. You even came back here to record your last album. What keeps you connected?

BJ: I don't know. It's just where I'm from. It's home. It's funny, a lot of the Berkeley kids used to be all, "East Bay, blah blah..." and I'd tell them, "You don't even live in the East Bay. I live in the East Bay. I'm from Rodeo, I'm from the sticks, that's the East Bay."

LL: You saw the Berkeley kids as more privileged or middle class?

BJ: Some of them I did, yeah. And then there were others that weren't, obviously.

LL: Berkeley's more of a toytown in some ways.

BJ: Well, it's a college town. That keeps it kind of removed from the rest of the area. Think of a place like Gainesville, Florida, or Athens, Georgia. They're both little bohemian places, but just outside of their borders you're dealing with inbred hillbillies. And that's what I was.

LL: That's what you were dealing with, or that's what you were?

BJ: Ha, ha. That's what I was dealing with. I think also that what came together when Gilman started was this hardcore passion, like everybody wanted something to happen, and they made it happen. I mean, if it didn't have so much passion behind it, it wouldn't still be happening now, 13 years later.

LL: Fourteen this New Year's Eve. I was thinking recently about how, a year and a half after it started, Tim Yohannan pulled *Maximum Rockroll's* money out of Gilman and closed it down. He said he didn't like where it was going, that it wasn't righteous enough. And his assumption was that that was it, the dream was over. I don't think in his wildest imagination did he ever believe that a bunch of punk kids could reopen it and keep it going for another 11 or 12 years.

BJ: Yeah, that's what makes it such an East Bay thing. I mean, it is a hardcore political place. It never lost that at all. It's almost self-destructed because of that many, many times. I like the fact that Tim Yohannan helped start Gilman, and that's great, but essentially it belonged to the people who cared enough about it. Like the people who run Gilman have changed so many times over the years, and it keeps

attracting new people who have the drive to keep it going. Right now it seems that there's a really cool thing happening there.

LL: I agree. But does it hurt to know that you can't play there?

BJ: I can play there with Pinhead Gunpowder. But Green Day can't play there now, yeah. And I understand that. You sign to a major label, and that's that. Anyway, it's a place that gives opportunities to lesser known bands. But they have lightened up a bit. The Alkaline Trio played there recently, and they had a tour bus out front. That's pretty...well, I've never heard of a tour bus out in front of Gilman before.

LL: Do you ever wish that some night you could pile into a little van and just drive down to Gilman and play an unannounced show there?

BJ: I'd probably do it if they said, hey, you guys wanna play? But it's been about eight years since anybody's called me up and asked if we wanted to play a gig there.

LL: Would that be a pretty emotional moment for you, setting foot on that stage again?

BJ: Well, it's like I've played in front of 300,000 people before, but to me Gilman will always seem bigger. Even when I go to see other bands. Recently I went to this new club, The Pound, in San Francisco, and the woman who owns it came up to me and asked, "Isn't this place bigger than Gilman?" And I said, "Nothing's ever gonna be bigger than Gilman."

LL: A couple quick questions about politics.

BJ: Oh, boy.

LL: Last fall you played — depending on who was doing the describing — either at a rally to help the musicians who were being evicted in San Francisco or at a Ralph Nader rally. It was never quite clear what your take on it was. I think Tre told me that the band wasn't there specifically to support Ralph Nader.

BJ: It was supposed to be a "million band march." It didn't quite make it to a million bands, though. A lot of my friends were getting thrown out of Downtown Rehearsal Studios, a place where bands had been practicing for years, because the new owners wanted to raise all the rents. That sort of hit home with me because it was about music and art, and it wasn't

just that studio; every day you could read in the paper how it was getting worse and worse for musicians in San Francisco. Rents were skyrocketing, even to the point where clubs were having a hard time staying open. After a while it starts to piss you off, and I thought my band could at least help bring attention to the issue. It's funny, because there's a guy who buys and sells property who hangs out at my mom's work, and he was telling her, "Oh, your son doesn't understand."

LL: How do you feel, being told that you don't understand the issue?

BJ: Well, that's obviously coming from someone who doesn't see the other side, that's never even been on the other side, that doesn't know what it's like to be thrown out of where you live.

LL: Somebody might argue that you're pretty well off, that you're not likely to get thrown out of anywhere.

BJ: Just because I'm successful doesn't mean I don't have a conscience. People say, "Why are you still angry? You're successful now." Well, I think that's even more of a reason to get involved with the things that you care about, because it makes your voice even louder.

LL: But at the same time, I get the impression that you're reluctant to be too outspoken about politics.

BJ: That's because I don't really know how to speak about politics, to verbalize my thoughts that much. It's hard. I think as I get older I'm figuring it out a bit more.

LL: The closest thing I've ever heard to a Green Day political song might be "Welcome To Paradise." As far as I know, it's about when you moved into a warehouse in West Oakland, which was a pretty rough neighborhood. You were still fairly young kids at the time. Was that kind of a shock for you?

BJ: Yeah. I don't think it was necessarily about politics, though, more about discovering life on your own. Most people wouldn't think of West Oakland as paradise, but in a way I thought it was.

LL: I was thinking of it more as gut-level politics, like "Welcome to the real world." When you were making your first video, I tried to talk Tre into doing "Welcome To Paradise." I suggested that you could do some social commentary so as to let people

know that even though your band is a lot of fun, you also care about things. And he got this real serious look on his face, like he was thinking about it, and then he said, "Yeah, you're right." Then there was a long pause, and he said, "Nah. We'd rather drive a car into a swimming pool."

BJ: Ha, ha. All right, Tre. Yeah, I was reluctant to put that song out as a single, even though a lot of people wanted us to, because it had already come out on Lookout Records before that. We were reluctant to put it on the album at all because of that.

LL: I was glad you did, because I felt it deserved to get heard by a bigger audience. Anyway, on your newest record, it seems like you're reacting a bit more to the world around you. It feels like a very thoughtful record, maybe a bit more "grown up," though that might sound like a terrible thing to say.

BJ: Well, some things that make me angry are the things I see on television, the stuff that's dumped on young people about how they're supposed to look or feel, how they need to buy products to make them feel good or look beautiful, sort of holding up this image and saying that "this is the life you should lead."

LL: Sort of like making them think they can buy a life instead of building one?

BJ: Yeah. Exactly. It's not just fashion. There are so many artificially big breasts on TV now, and so many men that have to have these perfect bodies, and the thing is that most people don't look like that at all. The scary thing is that it's getting to a point where people are paying thousands of dollars for supermodel eggs so they can supposedly make these perfect human beings.

LL: What would you think if someone came to you with a proposal to sell rock star eggs?

BJ: How much money have you got?

LL: I trust that's a joke?

BJ: Yeah, that's a joke. C'mon.

LL: Do you vote?

BJ: Yeah, I did. I voted.

LL: Have you always, or was this your first time?

BJ: I voted the first time I was eligible, when I turned 18. But then I went

through some years where I didn't vote at all, because I was disillusioned with the system.

LL: Are you basically optimistic or pessimistic about the way things are going, both in your local community and in America and the world at large?

BJ: I try to be optimistic. I voted for Nader this time. I was sort of torn between that and the lesser of two evils argument. I don't know, I got there and I was going to vote for Gore, and as soon as I got inside the booth, I couldn't do it, so...

LL: You travel a lot. Based on what you see, is the world getting better or worse? Do you fear for your children growing up, or are you hopeful for them?

BJ: I fear for them a lot. I think about moving out of Oakland a lot. Sometimes I think it's just too close to Los Angeles.

LL: Spiritually or physically?

BJ: Both. Sometimes California gets to be a bit much. I don't know if I want my kids growing up the way I did. I've thought at times about moving to the Midwest. So I don't know. Do I see things getting better or worse? Downtown Oakland is sort of rebuilding itself, and it's hard to figure out whether or not that's a good thing.

LL: Jerry Brown, the mayor, says, "What's the alternative? Leave it a slum?"

BJ: Well, I definitely don't want that. But I also don't want people to be chased out of affordable neighborhoods. Hopefully there's a way of building up a community in what are so-called slums but without chasing people out of them. A lot of artists are moving out to Richmond because they can't even afford Oakland anymore. Which sucks. Who the hell wants to move to Richmond?

LL: True. And once upon a time, it was "Who the hell wants to move to Oakland?" Poor old artists. It seems like wherever they go, the gentrification quickly follows. It's like they're the shock troops, they go in and make the neighborhood safe enough for the bankers and the stockbrokers. It's got to the point where if you see artists moving into your neighborhood, you might start thinking it's time to get out.

BJ: Yeah, here come the suits. As soon as I see a paintbrush, man, I'm gone. ☺

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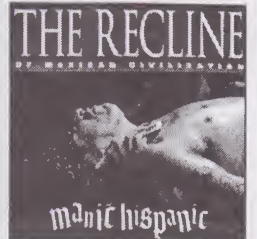
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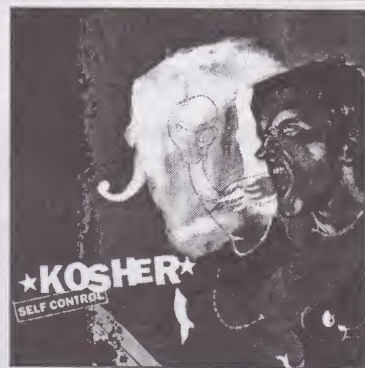
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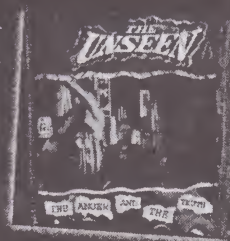
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ENDINGS: AL'S BAR UNPLUGGED

The PA was crappy, the air conditioning and ventilation nonexistent, and the club didn't even have a full liquor license, selling only beer and wine. Yet Al's Bar, which closed its doors Saturday night with little fanfare, possessed something you can't find at the faux-rock emporiums for tourists on the Sunset Strip: soul. The locus of the Downtown Arts District, Al's Bar had a policy - enacted by Lizzie Balough in the '80s and proudly maintained by more recent booking agents Toast and Jim Miller - of giving preference to experimental, arty, and uncommercial groups. You didn't see the usual heavy metal and pop-rock careerists who infest other joints. And speaking of joints, I suppose it's now safe to divulge that the back patio at Al's was a pot smoker's oasis, since cops and fire marshals rarely bothered to enter the bar, situated halfway between Skid Row and Little Tokyo.

There had been rumors for several months that Al's Bar would shut down after a new owner, Magnum Properties, purchased the century-old brick building that houses the historic downtown nightclub and adjoining American Hotel. But barflies, scenesters, and even employees were nonetheless caught off guard when the club hosted its final show, leaving behind several weeks' worth of now-cancelled bookings. The last band to officially perform at Al's wasn't even scheduled to play: After hearing news of the impending closure, stocking-masked surf combo the Black Widows rushed over from an earlier gig at Mr. T's Bowl in Highland Park, set up their equipment in the tiny backstage area to save time, and

played an instrumental set there for the small but frantic crowd.

You could argue that Al's Bar was L.A.'s version of Manhattan's legendary CBGB: Both were graffiti-slathered dives in not "nice" neighborhoods that grew out of the punk revolution. (L7, the Replacements, Love, Gun Club, Betty Blowtorch, Dwight Yoakam, and Beck are some of the notable artists who've played at Al's after owner Marc Kreisel took over the former truckers' bar in 1979.) Yet CBGB's artistic relevance largely faded after the '70s, whereas Al's was host-



FALLING

ing compelling bands up until its last night, with a bill that included meandering mood-rockers the Warlocks, the Fuse, the Witches, and high-energy Detroit trio the Sights.

Even before the Black Widows finished their show, much of the audience, caught up in a sentimental frenzy, began tearing souvenirs off the wall: stickers, posters, even chunks of the

stage backdrop. Several guys somehow managed to unbolt the door to the men's restroom, and carried it off in the confusion. Someone else smuggled out one of the barstools. A sublime, unframed portrait of Greta Garbo was torn in half by overeager fans trying to pry it from the wall, while greedy collectors ripped away the green felt of the pool table, with its distinctive white stenciled Al's Bar logos, when Toast wasn't looking. It was like the fall of Saigon, with a more amiable form of desperation. Among the teary-eyed revelers who weren't ransacking the place: Spaceland booker Jennifer Tefft, music archivists Van Frazier and Dean "the Tape Machine" Abramovitch, Greg "the Pope" Romero (now into his fifth decade of clubgoing), and members of the Neurotones, the Excessories, Flash Express, the Dagens, EMA 3 and Project K.

After the remaining stalwarts staggered uncertainly into the night ("Where are we going to hang out now?", they muttered to each other), imposing doorman Cliff Shegog locked the front door with its nautical porthole window one last time. Toast and beloved bartender Stay-C Little cleared away the empty beer bottles and switched off the lights, as dozens of small cockroaches scurried along the quiet bar, its only survivors. ☺

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HIT SQUAD

INSIDE MY BRAIN

Since this is my first column for *Hit List*, perhaps a brief introduction is in order. Some of you may recognize my name as a contributor to this fine rag already, as well as a variety of other rock mags and well-respected 'zines such as *Ugly Things* and *Misty Lane*, or even as the writer of liner notes for various retrospective CD issues of 60's garage and 70's punk bands. You may also know me as the

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publisher of *Cryptic Tymes* from 1990-95 and the one issue of *Do The Pop*, which I did with my wife Lisa a few years ago. That said, I was quite flattered to be offered a column in which to spew my opinions on various subjects, but of course mainly about cool, raw rock'n'roll.

As I write this, I am listening to a new ROLLING STONES bootleg CD on the Sister Morphine label called "Sympathy For The Devil." I mention this because I am a big STONES fan, although I tend to revere only the stuff they did up to 1974, since after the MICK TAYLOR-era I feel they lost a lot of what made them such a loose, rough, rebellious band and started flirting with disco and mediocre material. The CD age has opened up the floodgates for those of us who dig the earlier periods with BRIAN JONES and MICK TAYLOR, offering us - especially in the last few years - a ton of cool stuff that either the STONES or their label, for whatever reason, have chosen to deny their fans. When I last spoke to Jeff Bale, he was lamenting the lack of decent CD reissues of early STONES material. And I have to agree that for such a major band they have been terribly ill-served by the CD reissue medium. While other bands, including many of their contemporaries, have offered us box sets, rare outtakes collections, BBC session releases, and decent reissue/remastered collections, the STONES have not. The ABCO "remastered" CDs that came out in the late 80s were a joke; they sounded like they'd been mastered underwater or by someone who thinks music sounds better if you put pillows over your speakers while listening to it! On top of that, they reproduced the U.S. releases that often dropped songs and were released Stateside in "electronically reprocessed stereo," which is one of the worst things record companies have ever invented. For those unfamiliar with this process, which was used on lots of mid-60s material, it involves taking the mono signal, adding treble to one channel, bass to the other, and unnecessary reverb all over. Ugh! The "remastered" CDs include all their albums from the first in 1964 up to "Let It Bleed," before they formed their

own label. This stuff is controlled by ALLEN KLEIN, so you can and should blame him. He is, incidentally, also the owner of the CAMEO-PARKWAY label, which is why there are no legit CD reissues of ? AND THE MYSTERIANS or early BOB SEGER SYSTEM. The only exception to this was the excellent three-CD box set, "The London Years," which includes all of the STONES' singles and was prepared for reissue by Andrew Loog Oldham using original mono masters (which he apparently owns and fall outside of Klein's jurisdiction). Alas, this is now out of print.

So, in the last few years, it has been up to bootleggers to deal with the situation at hand. You can find cool bootleg digipack reissues, apparently of German origin, that are exact repros of all the early STONES albums, in their original U.K. formats, with bonus tracks, in mono, the way they were meant to be heard! They use a variety of sources, likely very clean vinyl, reel-to-reel tapes, or the very limited Japanese pressings which came out a few years ago and then were stopped by Mr. Klein and subsequently disappeared. These include great records like their self-titled debut, "No.2," "Out Of Heads," "Around and Around," "Between The Buttons" and "Aftermath," all of which came out in the U.S. butchered in much the same way that Capitol did with the BEATLES releases (in order to squeeze more albums out). One exception to these is the amazing digipack boot, "Stereo." This is one of the rarest STONES releases ever. It came out in Germany in the mid-60s, and was comprised of true stereo mixes of STONES songs that were mixed to mono originally (even if the STONES actually recorded the song in stereo), since most people still had mono players. Germany, being ahead of the game with regard to stereophonic equipment, became a sort of "testing ground" for stereo releases. Legend has it that the Stones agreed to send the unmixed master tapes of songs to German label engineers for mixing into "true" or "wide" stereo, as it has now become known. On top of that, they included some unreleased songs and different versions, just for the hell of it. The album came out only in Germany and eventually became a huge collector's item due to the sonic differences in the songs. If you've never heard "Satisfaction" in true stereo, the version on here will blow your mind. It almost sounds like a wholly different version, with the fuzz guitar blasting out of one channel, and the acoustic guitar really high in the mix on the other channel, whereas the latter is buried in the mono mix that most people are familiar with. Besides better-known songs like "Time Is On My Side," "The Last Time," and "Get Off Of My Cloud," the LP also included rarities like "Stewed and Keefed," "How Many More Times," "Look What You've Done" and alternate versions of "Heart Of Stone" and "19th Nervous Breakdown." The digipack adds four live songs, also recorded in stereo, from a 1964 BBC concert!!

You can also look for these boot releases, which come recommended by me: "Beat Beat Beat At The BBC" on Invasion, a double disc set of BBC sessions; "Liv'r Than You'll Ever Be" on OMS, a "30th Anniversary Edition" of one of the first boots ever made of a 1969 Oakland show; "Unreleased Decca Live Album," on Stonehenge, which is a planned 1972 release that got squashed; and "Bedspring Symphony Revisited," on Mighty Diamond, a great sounding and killer live '73 set. Also of note is a reissue of Yellow Dog's killer "Black Box" 3 CD set of 60's outtakes, with a fourth CD added and now dubbed "the Millennium Edition." Since there is no legit boxset of rare STONES material, this is

about as good as it gets! The packaging and sound are so good on this that one might think it was actually a legit release, but it is not. Another cool STONES box set is the "Touring Party" seven-CD box on the Rattlesnake label, culled from their legendary 1972 U.S. tour. This is not a set for the casual fan, however; it is geared to the truly obsessive fan. Another great boot release, also on the Sister Morphine label, is "Walk Upon The Water," a fab two-disc set. The title comes from the original title of "Aftermath," but Decca got cold feet about releasing it with that title, some songs were dropped, others were added, and it became "Aftermath." The CD constructs the original track listing for the LP, with alternate mixes, true stereo versions, and songs slated for the LP that were dropped, as well as a slew of other stuff from the same era in fantastic sound. The same label is responsible for the aforementioned "Sympathy For The Devil" CD, which gathers a bunch of "Beggar's Banquet" outtakes in the best sound yet onto one handy CD! Like the BEATLES, the STONES mixed differently for mono and stereo releases, creating interesting anomalies along the way. For more information on this, and the various versions which show up on CDs, I suggest checking out the Stereo Stones website by Chris M. (<http://members.aol.com/share-co/StereoStones.htm>).

The same can also be said for another fave of mine, the WHO. You can find a boot CD of their first album in wonderful mono with a slew of bonus tracks that sonically puts to shame the crappy reprocessed stereo version MCA has had out for ages. I'm not sure if that material was recorded in mono, but since Shel Talmy still owns the tapes and won't sell them to the WHO organization, we may not see a legal remixed or remastered issue for a long time. Even on the "30 Years of Maximum R&B" box set, the songs from that album were not taken from any master tape, while many others were remixed or remastered for the set. This, of course, led to the reissuing of classic WHO LPs as expanded remixed or remastered editions a few years ago. Strangely enough, though, "A Quick One (While He's Away)" is in mono and "The Who Sell Out" is in stereo. Those crafty bootleggers at Wholiday Music rectified this by making available "A Stereo Quick One (While Pete's Away)," and a Japanese company has put out a mono version of "Sell Out." WHO fans must obtain these to hear the differences in the mixes. Personally, I think "A Quick One" sounds amazing in stereo, although both mixes have their charms. Ditto for "Sell Out," which in mono has a noticeably different ambience and contains certain songs with completely different guitar solos! I used to think the remastered version of "Live at Leeds" was an improvement over the original LP, which was a classic in itself. Until, that is, I found a copy of the bootleg "Live At Leeds Complete." After hearing the boot, the problems with the remastered "Live At Leeds" are obvious: the original tapes were tinkered with. Entwistle overdubbed new vocals and bass parts, as did Daltrey and possibly Townshend. The boot features the entire show, which includes ALL of "Tommy." As a double disc,

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it's over two hours of primal, undubbed, unedited Who. Also curious is why they edited out an entire part where they go into "Spoonful" during "Shakin' All Over" on the remaster, which is left intact on the bootleg. Oddly enough, they did the same on the U.S. version of the "BBC Sessions" disc. On the U.K. version, the "Spoonful" part is left in and there's one more song ("Man With Money") than on the U.S. version. Apparently, the Who are going to release their own "deluxe edition" of "Live At Leeds" with the entire performance, but likely enhanced by overdubs like the last remaster. For an interesting comparison of the boot "Leeds" vs. the remaster, check out <http://www.lukpac.org/1a1.htm>. Another fantastic boot disc that contains an entire run-thru of "Tommy" is "Amazing Journey." Previously available on a number of labels in a lower-fi and incomplete form, this double disc set comes in a lavish double "softpack" sleeve with miniature sleeves for the CDs and some really nice pics of the group. The sound quality is also much better, and the band sounds incredible.

On the subject of bootlegs, I should mention that these days one needs to be careful about what exactly you're getting. Midnight Records in particular sells a lot of these so-called "Euro Imports," but I got so pissed at them when the last batch I ordered of Stones boots were badly made CDRs (with cheaply xeroxed, blurry artwork!), not copied correctly, and filled with clicks, static and channels cutting in and out. One was even blank! Nothing against CDRs, I make 'em all the time and trade with people, but I don't charge \$24.99 for 'em and I make sure they're copied properly! On top

After hearing the boot, the problems with the remastered "Live At Leeds" are obvious: the original tapes were tinkered with.

of that, when I sent them back, they charged me a 20% "restocking fee." Midnight is also in the habit of reaming the customer by overcharging on shipping. I'd order four or five CDs at once, only then have them all arrive in separate packages, each charged a flat rate "shipping and handling" charge. One day, I received four separate packages on the same day of four CDs I ordered at the same time! What's up with that? Places that are far more reputable and cheaper that I prefer to deal with are Bomp!, Mojo, Midheaven, Underground Medicine, Discollector, Vintage Vinyl (although they've raised their prices a lot recently), Dead End Records, Partylights and a fellow named Zefiro who offers a great boot selection and great prices at his website, The ROIO Reference Page.

Speaking of reissues and remasters and getting off the subject of boots, I have in front of me the new Rhino double Yardbirds "Ultimate!" anthology. Being a YARDBIRDS nut, I have practically every reissue and repackaging available, so it was with some hesitation that I approached yet another repackaging of their material. Greg Russo, who has written a book about the 'Birds that I haven't read has been talking the comp. up on the Shindig!

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newsgroup to which I belong, and reassuring the curious that the sound on this is the best yet for 'Birds reissues. That said, it does sound good, although not as fantastically better as I expected, but it is a good intro to the band for the uninitiated. For completist's sake, the version of "Mr. You're A Better Man Than I" does contain an extra verse edited out of the original and is a different mix. The previously unreleased stereo mix of "Paff...Bum" is also included. That said, I found some of the track selections odd, to say the least, and I wouldn't exactly consider tunes like "Questra Volta" and "Ha Ha Said the Clown" to be "ultimate Yardbirds." The accompanying booklet with an essay by CUB KODA (R.I.P.) is fantastic, though.

While on the subject of things said on newsgroups, I should mention that I am an Internet junkie who subscribes to a variety of different clubs/groups/forums. Some of my faves include the Garage66 group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Garage66>), the punk77 list (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/punk77>), and the Shindig! forum, an offshoot of Mojo Mills' excellent fanzine of the same name (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Shindig-Magazine>). Also cool is the Fuzztones discussion list, which if you're a fan of the 'Tones finds like-minded individuals exchanging stories and info (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Fuzztones>) and Nuggets & Pebbles, another 60's garage-oriented forum (<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/nuggetsandpebbles>). I also frequent Lee of Dead Flowers' webzine/maillorder Roses On Yer Grave club (<http://clubs.yahoo.com/clubs/rosesonyergrave>), which often has interesting dialogue going, and if you haven't checked out the webzine and mailorder, do so now! Of course, one of longest-running lists is the Bomp! List, always an entertaining read and full of discussions about, but not always limited to, garage rock from the 1960s to the present. While I'm on the subject, I would like to mention, though, that it seems as if almost every group falls victim to, at one time or another, some idiot who likes to get on and just start shit up with people. I'm talking about the kind of ill-mannered cretin who constantly insults everyone else's tastes, bands, fanzines, etc. It's people like these that have made me unsubscribe from certain groups, and who basically ruin what could be great forums for fans of similar musical interest. I don't know why, but there always seems to be one of them on every list!

With the advent of more and more webzines, I don't get as many print 'zines as I used to, yet I should mention the excellent *Head In Milk Bottle* 'zine. Which, like the name of this column, takes its name from an ANGRY SAMOANS tune. Hailing from St. Louis, this punk fanzine began in the mid-1980s but is now "back from the grave" with its first issue in over 15 years! Featuring interviews with TOMORROW'S CAVEMEN, THE HATE BOMBS, THE PLUTONIUM KIDZ, THE GREEN-HORNES, plus articles on JOEY RAMONE (R.I.P.) and a St. Louis punk history. A fine read! They are, or course, linked to the web though at <http://www.garagepunk.com/index2.html>. Another cool publication is *GAB!*, which stands for garage and beat and is put out by P. Edwin Letcher. The first issue I saw, which is #2, features stuff on the MOONEY SUZUKI, INVISIBLE MEN, THE REMAINS, and more (stubbo2000@earthlink.net). The long-running 'zine *Roctoher* is always a fun and exhaustive read, and the latest "themed" issue is subtitled "robot rock n' roll." Email editor@roctoher.com for info. While on the subject of robots and rock 'n' roll, do yourself a favor and check

out "Monkey Vs. Robot," a short film directed by NATHAN POMMER featuring a hilarious early DEVO-esque song by JAMES KOCHALKA SUPERSTAR. See the film at: http://01films.com/films_view.asp?id=228. There's also a new issue of *Black To Comm* out, by one of the few people who DOESN'T have a website, Chris Stigliano. Issue #24 features articles on the DOGS, GREG SHAW, 70's fanzines, and a ton of record and CD reviews. I also enjoy regular 'zines like *Shredding Paper* and *Carbon 14* (always with a free vinyl EP), both of which have large distribution and should be available at most magazine stands. Speaking of things available at regular newsstands, I just had to pick up the 90th issue of *Celebrity Sleuth* magazine, a fairly dumb rag featuring fuzzy pics of stars in the nude, for the great four-page spread on POISON IVY of THE CRAMPS. So why is she featured in a nudie mag? Buy it and find out!!

On the book front, I recommend the cool *Urban Spacemen and Wayfaring Strangers* by Richie Unterberger (Miller Freeman Books), a companion to his *Unknown Legends of Rock 'n' Roll* book. This time around, he gives us interesting insights into THE PRETTY THINGS, ELECTRIC PRUNES, RATIONALS, THE MIDNIGHTERS, BOBBY FULLER, BEAU BRUMMELS, FUGS, POETS and others. I like Unterberger's writing, and although I know others who find him too critical, I find his criticisms interesting and enjoyable. I also really enjoyed *Don't Forget About Me: The Eddie Cochran Story* by Julie Mundy & Darrel Higman (Billboard Books), which gave fresh, new insight into this rock 'n' roll legend's all-too-short life. Another book for gaining new insight is *Brain Jones: The Last Decadent* by Jeremy Reed (Creation Books) which, even amongst all the other books on Mr. Jones, manages to shed new light on this incredibly talented yet tragic figure. A couple of other great reads, and not even related to music for me have included *Make Love, Not War* by David Allyn (Little, Brown and Co.), which is a look at the sexual revolution of the 1970s. Absolutely fascinating and incredibly well-written. Then there's *Nickled & Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich. A journalist with a Ph.D. in Biology, Ehrenreich went "undercover" as a sort of migrant worker, accepting positions at low-paying jobs in chain hotels, restaurants, and even Wal-Mart to gain insight into the life of the average "working poor." It's not a long book, only 221 pages, but that's plenty for her to weave an incredible, if somewhat depressing, picture of how downright devious and evil a lot of these corporations are in their treatment of workers.

Speaking of evil corporations, I think everyone should read *Fast Food Nation* by Eric Schlosser (Houghton Mifflin Books). Subtitled "The Dark Side of the All-American Meal," this fascinating and often scary exposé of what exactly is in all that fast food you eat should be enough to turn you off to fast food forever. I myself, while not a vegetarian by a long stretch, have never been much of a fast food fan, mainly because I don't think a lot of that stuff tastes good and I enjoy cooking too much, but this book only solidifies what I had suspected all along about it — that this stuff is just not good for you at all. Some choice parts include him touring a "flavor factory" which prepares a lot of the "flavors" that are added to fast food to make it taste "oh so delicious," and the reasons why fast food is so cheap. It's a revelation about the meat used in fast food chains: there is shit in it. And I'm not referring to all the filler and fake stuff they put in it, I mean actual feces. Read the book to find out what I mean. And to draw a comparison of sorts to *Nickled & Dimed*, he goes into detail about the way these places treat franchise owner and workers. If the truth about what is in the food doesn't churn your stomach, the rabid violation of human rights made by these companies should.

Lastly, Re/Search has a new book out entitled *Real Conversations*, which has four interviews by Vale with Henry Rollins, Jello Biafra, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Billy Childish. Suffice to say you will find four differing opinions spouted by all them on politics, art, and music that are equally engaging for different reasons. The big surprises for me were finding out that Rollins collects BEATLES bootlegs and that CHILDISH is quite the theologian. I didn't know much about FERLINGHETTI, other than the fact that he helped start City Lights Books, and that when my wife Lisa interviewed him years ago she said he was a jerk to her, but he has some real great things to say about poetry, art, politics and the media. While I have always respected BIAFRA as an informed, politically aware and media savvy person, his lack of insight into the disturbing recent revelations about the Green Party and his seeming ability to brush off the fact that Nader ain't "all that" and, in a lot of ways, was responsible for Bush being elected, disturbed me. But that's just one area where we disagree, and I found a lot of what he says to be pretty insightful. One thing that struck me as interesting is what all four have in common: they all hate fast food and George W. Bush!

I'd like to wrap up here with a few video- and TV-related things. It would be remiss of me not to mention that I love TV. I also like watching videos of music stuff, and the occasional thing on VH1 and MTVX — while playing a lot of crap that falls into that new sort of metal-funk-alternative stuff, they do occasionally play some decent old punk videos (usually live clips) by bands like THE CLASH, SEX PISTOLS, X, JAM, BUZZCOCKS, CRAMPS, etc. Once in a while I'll even catch a DROPKICK

MURPHYS or WAYNE KRAMER vid, but most of what they show is horrible. So I tend to watch more videos and DVDs. Acetate Records recently sent me a copy of the movie *Badsville*, a sort of documentary on Los Angeles indie bands. While it compares itself to *Hype!*, I don't think it's as well-made and, unfortunately, a lot of the bands on it didn't thrill me, with the exception of THE HANGMEN, STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS, TEXAS TERRI & THE STIFF ONES, and THE SUPERBEES. Also, the story wasn't as interesting. Yes, it's a plastic, corporate world that likes plastic, faceless bands, but what else do you expect in Los Angeles? Better for me was Doug Cawker's *Born To Lose*, the story of a struggling punk band dealing with drug addiction and auditioning bass players that are too "Chili-Pepperish," which has a killer soundtrack to boot. On the TV front, I have a new favorite cartoon show, Nickelodeon's *Spongebob Squarepants*, which emanates from the mind of Mr. Lawrence, who used to work on *Ren & Stimpy*. While not as adult in subject matter as that, this cartoon is easily as irreverent, focusing on a group of underwater creatures that include a really dumb Starfish named Patrick Star, a cranky diner owner

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named Mr. Krabs, a squirrel who wears an air-breathing helmet named Sandy Cheeks, a grumpy co-worker named Squidward, and main character Spongebob, who's a fun-loving and overly innocent sponge with a pet snail (that meows like a cat!) named Gary. I was, however, disappointed that the cartoon has recently began a promotional tie-in with Burger King. It goes along with the concept put forth in *Fast Food Nation* of how these places brainwash kids into accepting their crappy products by hooking them on them at a young age.

While on the subject of irreverent TV shows, check out *The Chris Isaak Show* if you have Showtime. Now, I'm sure that Isaak's music probably falls outside of the listening spectrum

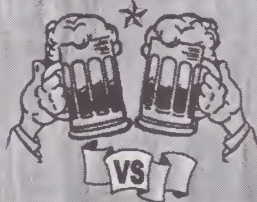
of most *Hit List* readers, but his show is hilarious! I caught it by accident one evening when I was watching Dennis Miller; after his show ended they announced "coming up next: *The Chris Isaak Show*" and I thought "Huh, does he have a talk show or something?" Imagine my surprise to find that it is a comedy show, loosely based on him and his band (who play themselves!) with the sort of off-beat subject matter and comedy that made me love *Seinfeld*. In fact, the comparison is not unfounded, as Chris plays himself with a self-deprecating style and cynical humor that pokes fun at the entertainment industry, record companies, fans, relationships, and sex. The fact that it's on Showtime means that the

I just had to pick up the 90th issue of Celebrity Sleuth magazine, a fairly dumb rag featuring fuzzy pics of stars in the nude, for the great four-page spread on POISON IVY of THE CRAMPS.

band members talk like musicians, drink, swear, and display some nudity. You see, in every episode Chris has some sort of dilemma that he needs to discuss with his "therapist," Mona, a woman who works at Bimbo's nightclub and whose sole purpose appears to be to get naked on a revolving bed in the basement, and whose image is then projected into a kind of fake aquarium screen inside the club itself. As crazy as that sounds, the system — which utilizes an elaborate series of mirrors — was actually invented by a magician in the 1930s and is still utilized in the real Bimbo's for that purpose today! Lastly, as a Star Trek fan I am quite excited about *Enterprise*, the new Star Trek series debuting this fall on UPN. Set in the 22nd century, 150 years from now and 100 years before the first Star Trek show, it will tell the adventures of the crew of the first S.S. Enterprise, the first human ship with warp capability to venture outside our solar system. Scott Bakula, who is best known for his role on the show *Quantum Leap*, (which I was a fan of back in the 1980s) will play Capt. Jonathan Archer. With that, I'm out of here (at pre-warp speed) and am going back inside my brain! ☎

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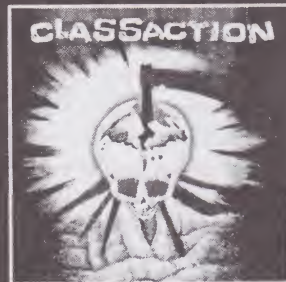
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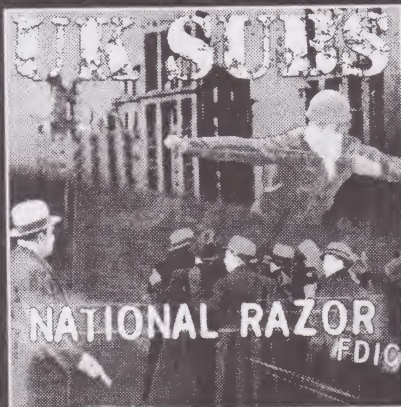
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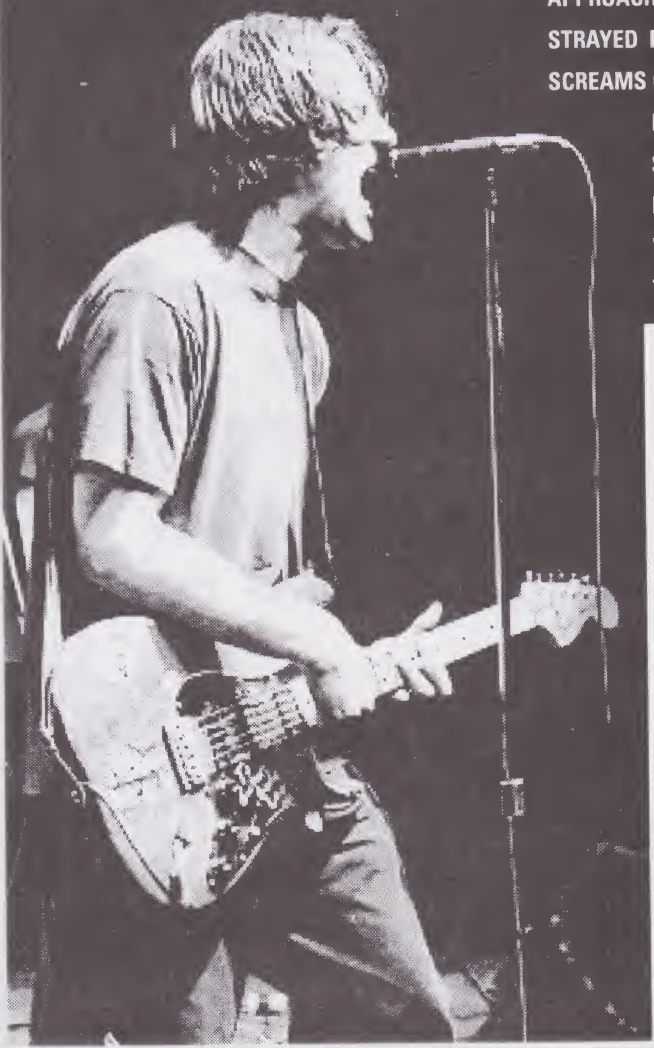
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Easy & Action

INTERVIEW BY HANK CHERRY

FROM THE STREETS OF DETROIT COMES A NEW SONIC BLAST – EASY ACTION. THE BAND MEMBERS HAVE BEEN FLAILING AWAY AT NOISY PUNK IN DIFFERENT BANDS FOR ABOUT TWENTY YEARS NOW (NEGATIVE APPROACH, THE NECROS, THE LAUGHING HYENAS, AND GRAVATAR, TO NAME A FEW). THE SONIC SLUDGE OF THE HYENAS AND THE PUNK DISCHARGE OF NEGATIVE APPROACH AND THE NECROS CAN BE FOUND HERE. JOHN BRANNON'S VOCALS HAVEN'T STRAYED FAR FROM THE ANGRY YOWL HE FIRST USED BACK IN 1981. HIS NIGHTMARISH SCREAMS COLLIDE WITH THE FUZZY SLAM OF HIS NEW RHYTHM SECTION, RON SAKOWSKI (EX-NECROS/LAUGHING HYENAS) AND DRUMMER JOHN LEMAY. THE SWAGGER OF THE STOOGES IS PREVALENT IN THE SONGS, BUT IT IS SOMETHING MORE THAN THEIR FOREFATHERS THAT HAUNTS THIS BAND. THE PSYCHOTIC BLEATING OF BRANNON'S VOICE AGAINST HAROLD RICHARDSON'S GUITAR MAKES FOR A MIGHTY SONIC STEW. THE TALES OF A DISAFFECTED MOTHERFUCKER NEVER SOUNDED SO GOOD.



Negative Approach started out in the barren Michigan streets, during Reagan's first term. They laid the groundwork for angry pissed-off kids everywhere. Their songs laid waste to the sentimental "Lucky Star" goopy pap about to burst onto the country from another Michigan native. Negative Approach howled against everything, even you. The anger didn't come in waves, it washed over you in a feast of harrowing noise bursts. Less friendly, less concerned with the politics at hand, Brannon's gang in Negative Approach wanted only to be rec-

ognized for the hate-fueled punks that they were. When he sang, "You bore the shit right out of me/All the things you say you do/Not the least bit interested/Don't wanna have to listen to you," well, it felt like he was talking to more than just mom and dad or stupid drunk jockboys. He was talking to all of us. So shape up, shithead.

Negative Approach fizzled out around 1984. The Necros were still trudging through the midwestern punk terra firma, blasting their noise into any ears still deluded by the jangly pop of R.E.M. or that Madonna girl. But for the most part the initial wave of hardcore punk rock in America had settled. Around 1986 Brannon's new band, the Laughing Hyenas, began touring and recording in



Detroit. Former L-Seven (not Los Angeles' L7, but Detroit's own version) guitarist Larissa Strickland had joined up with Brannon, together with bassman Kevin Munro and drummer Jim Kimball. The sounds were slower, more antsy and slightly offbeat. The voice now growled and brayed with a heart so full of hate that at times it seemed as if the band would succumb to its own nasty sound. They were among the first noise-rock outfits to pull in a fan base and keep the rock output hateful, while strangling the pop element that was beginning to lurk in independent releases. Want the Meat Puppets? Stay home then. This stuff was noisy dirge rock for the lonely and regretless fiend.

But by 1995, only a few were still left to care, including those remaining in the band. After the release of the blues-soaked album "Hard Times", the Hyenas called it quits, and it seemed as if that was it for fans of Brannon's trademark howl. Until now.

Hank Cherry (H): How was the record release show?

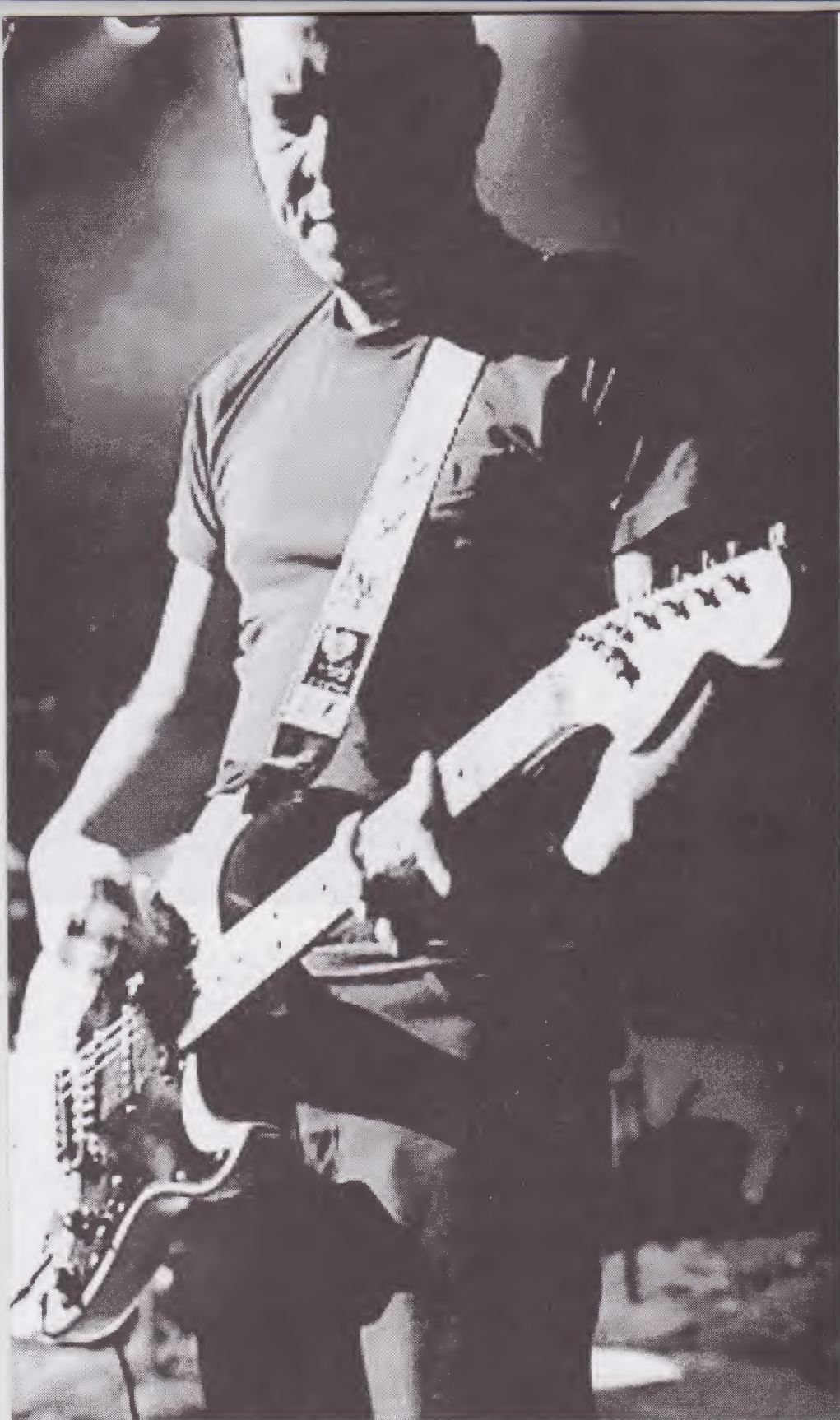
John Brannon, vocals (B): It was good. We sold out the club and sold some records. Chris X from Reptilian flew out

with a box of stuff and we got first pressings, so Reptilian really came through.

Harold Richardson, lead guitar (R): It was awesome, at The Gold Dollar, in Cass Corridor in Detroit.

Ron Sakowski, bass (S): Yeah, it was phenomenal, the best show that I've seen at the Gold Dollar, they were actually

"WHEN EASY ACTION FIRST GOT TOGETHER, WE DID A LOT OF COVERS 'CUZ BASICALLY WE WERE JUST A BUNCH OF GUYS PLAYING SOME TUNES. GLAM STUFF, YOU KNOW — T.REX, BOWIE, THE ROXY MUSIC SONG. IT DOESN'T REALLY SOUND LIKE ROXY MUSIC, IT'S OUR GARAGE VERSION OF ROXY."



turning people away. It was great that Chris came up and hung out and brought all the merchandise with him. It was like "Hey, we have a record release show and we really have the product."

H: Are you pretty happy with the record?

B: Yeah, it's OK. You know we did what we could. It's how we sounded during those few days.

S: Fuck, yeah. I'm really happy with it, especially for the amount of time we spent recording it. The cover artwork by Mitch O'Connell is incredible. I'm super, super happy with everything.

H: John, you're playing guitar on the record, right?

B: Yeah, I've never played guitar on a record before.

H: It's a whole different scenario, isn't it?

B: Well, it kind of frees me up, you know? I've always written songs. I wrote them for NA and the Hyenas. I'd come up with a riff and then show it to whoever was playing guitar, Rob or Larissa. Playing seems kind of weird, but it's really cool. Live, I play the guitar about half the time, and then just sing for the rest. It's totally different for me.

H: When did you all meet?

B: Well, Ron and I have known each other since the early eighties. He played in the last version of the Necros, and then the last version of the Hyenas with me.

S: I'd known John since around 1981 or 1982. I used to go see the Necros and Negative Approach when I was a kid. I also went to a number of Laughing Hyenas gigs. In fact, at a couple of the Hyenas first shows they opened for the Necros, way back when we were about to fall apart and they were just starting out.

B: Harold was a friend from Ann Arbor. And while the Hyenas were in limbo, when we didn't know what was going on, Harold and me would sometimes jam.

R: Yeah, John was still in the Hyenas when we started jamming in the mid-nineties. But our memories are kind of bad, since we're all old men now!

H: This record seems to have more of a hard driving feel to it than that last Laughing Hyenas record.

B: Yeah, yeah, yeah! "Hard Times" was kind of a down record. I said to myself after that one that I had to make a rocker, you know, for the kids. Easy Action reflects a different attitude. It's where I'm at now.

H: Was this more of a group effort, as far as the writing is concerned, or did John come up with most of the songs?

B: I came up with some songs, but it was really the whole band. It's been pretty equal, and every one came up with riffs. I wrote all of the lyrics.

R: Ron has written quite a few of our tunes. We haven't used all of them yet, though, because we're still working on songs for the next release.

H: You recorded with Al Sutton, how was that?

B: He had already done some of the Hyenas stuff, like the "Crawl" EP.

R: He's alright. He's an average Joe, which is good. We finished it in six days.

S: We recorded at Rust Belt (Sutton's Studio in Royal Oak Michigan). He's a really cool guy to work with – he's got great gear and great motivational skills. A couple of times when we'd get really frustrated or fried on something, he knew exactly the right things to say. He managed to calm us down so that we'd actually play it right. He's got that knack for dealing with musicians, not by putting them in their place but by helping them realize that they don't have to get so stressed. Magnetic tape can be recorded over and over again.

H: How did you hook up with Reptilian?

B: Through one band called Chapstik, and another called Thrall. We sent 'em a tape, and it all happened pretty quick.

R: A friend of mine, Leighton, told us that Chris X was doing singles, which was what we were into at that time since we didn't have that many songs. It's worked out great so far.

H: It seems like a good match because Reptilian is now doing a lot of noise stuff, and you guys fit in well with that sound.

B: I really don't know what we fit in with!

H: You all went down and did a show last summer in New Orleans. How did that come about?

B: It was this weird thing. Marlboro gave

us all this money to go down there. And Harold's sister lives there, so we had a place to stay. It was cool, since we just kind of took a little vacation.

S: Harold's sister knew somebody from a promotion agency, and they hooked us up with Marlboro. Not that I'm a cigarette smoker, but if a cigarette company is going to give us a bunch of money to go down and play a show, then why not do it? Plus, you get to play out of town and that's always enjoyable. It seemed like we'd wake up, eat something, and then start drinking. When we got tired of drinking, we ate some more, and then we went out drinking after that. We hit the titty bars and Bourbon Street. It was like five days of drinking and being a freak, and only one night of playing.

H: Are you getting ready to tour?

B: Well, people have gotta get hip to the fact that I have a new band, and we've gotta get the record out into stores. So yeah, definitely.

R: We'll probably tour during the tail end of summer and the early fall. None of us have done much touring for a while.

H: What's the best part of touring?

B: Just knowing you're getting out of town! I live in Detroit so, you know, it's nice to get the fuck out of the ghetto for a while. The Hyenas used to travel a lot, but for the past five years I haven't toured a whole lot.

R: For me the best thing is just getting to play every night.

S: I guess hearing a different accent and eating different food every week. The food is really different everywhere.

H: What's the worst thing about touring?

S: Normal stress, you know, the normal road fatigue. Everone starts getting on each other's nerves, but normally we try and keep that in check with this band. Nothing has really gotten to the point that it's outta hand with Easy Action. Back when I was in the Necros, there was a moment when Andy threw a folding chair at Barry because of a little discussion that went wrong!

H: This record seems to have a lot

more energy, much like an old Negative Approach record.

B: That's gonna be there 'cuz that's my shit. This is definitely for the kids.

H: Whose idea was it to do the Roxy Music song?

R: John's. I didn't really want to do it. I wanted to do an Alice Cooper tune.

B: When Easy Action first got together, we did a lot of covers 'cuz basically we were just a bunch of guys playing some tunes. Glam stuff, you know – T.Rex, Bowie, the Roxy Music song. It doesn't really sound like Roxy Music, it's our garage version of Roxy. Do you dig the album?

H: Yeah, I've been a fan since Negative Approach.

B: I think it's got a good sound. I'm hoping that it's gonna appeal to all those people who dug NA or the Hyenas, since it's a good mix of both bands. I don't know how people are gonna react to it, though, since I haven't gotten any feedback yet. It's gonna be weird to see who it reaches out to. But the bottom line is that I like it.

H: What's your favorite Alice Cooper song?

B: That's a tough question. Probably something off of "Love it to Death" or "Killer", maybe "The Ballad of Dwight Fry". "Desperado" is also really good. We've got a tape of it, so you know that on tour we might play that one.

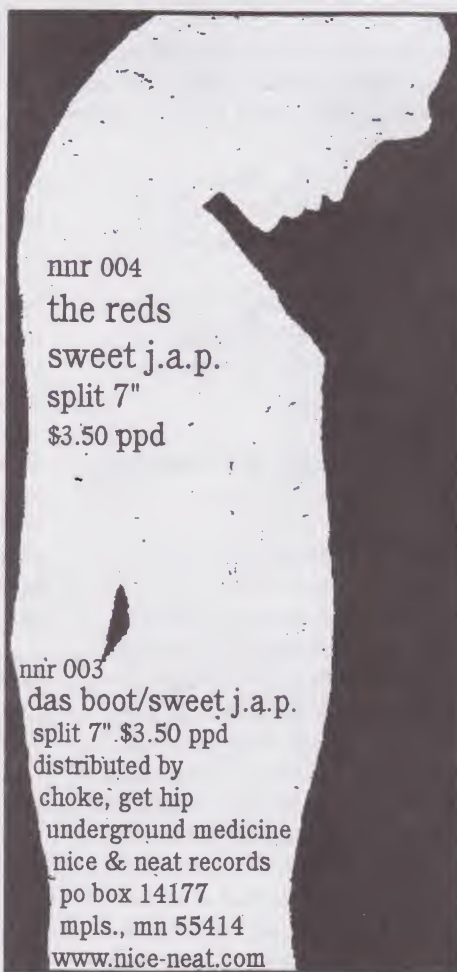
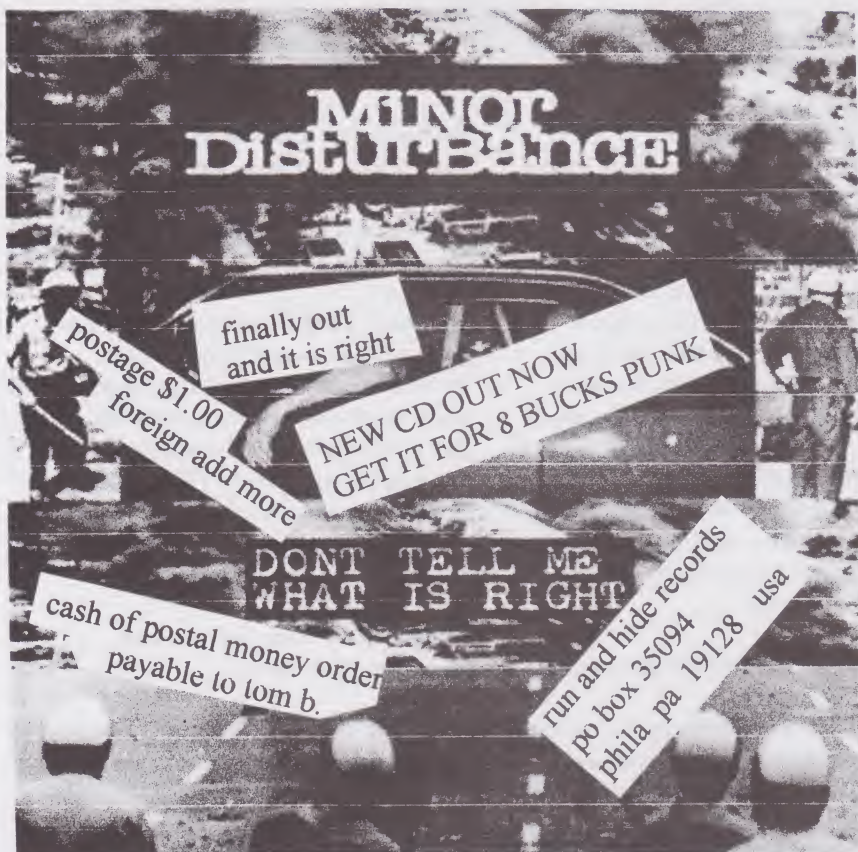
S: I'd say "Desperado", just because of its intensity.

H: One last question, John. I hear you've got a thing for Britney Spears.

B: Oh, yeah. I like wholesome girls, man, and she's like the girl next door. I really like that "all-American girl" thing. I'm really a sucker for that shit.

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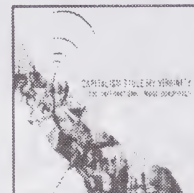
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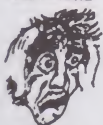
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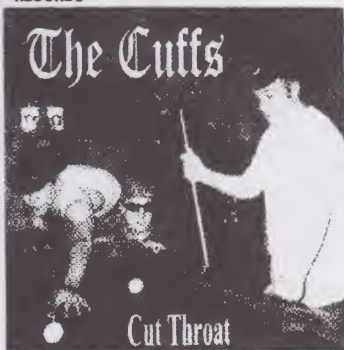
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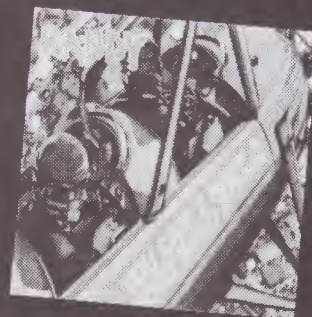
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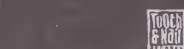
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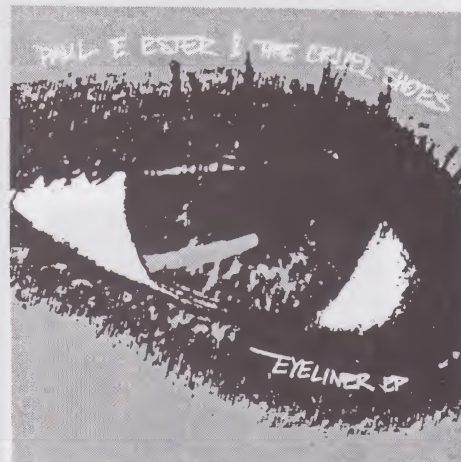
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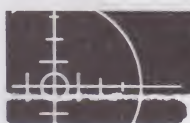
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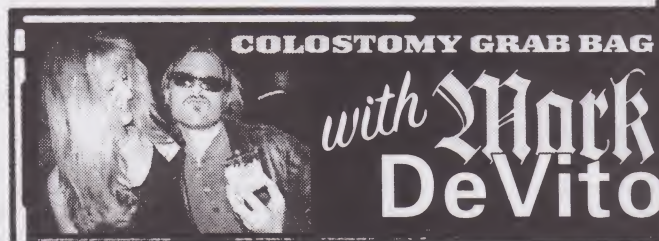
Alright there, you Rivetheads! Metal up your keisters and all hail Satan passes! We was havin' a metal hurricane this month and I was lucky enuff to be standing in the epicenter or whatever. Big ol' Slayer was in town to tear it up a bit, which they did quite successfully, I might add. I got to talk with Machine Head about their new disc *Supercharger*, which came out October 2nd. The Thrash of the Titans benefit show swooped in to kick a few butts around the Bay, and I even had time to go to a Metallica Fan Convention, but that's another story... A GREAT BIG FUCKIN' THANK YOU to Damian for pointing out one of the most horrendous mistakes I have made in my short-lived career as a writer (don't worry, I haven't quit my day job yet), which was that I left Slayer's *Reign In Blood* off my list of Top 25 metal albums last issue. Not to worry, since Kerry's been bitch-slapping me every day on his way to the studio and Tom leaves nasty little post-its on my PeeChee folder. I've learned not to be hasty when writing these lists, and to check my CDs as well as my LPs next time. Removing one's head from one's ass was also a suggestion I took to heart....

Anyway, back to the grind: Slayer and Pantera. San Jose. BE THERE! I was. Slayer were absolutely ripping. They never fail and if ever they delivered the goods, it was that night. His Dark Minions were truly in command of the entire audience, as they tore through classics and a goodly dose of new offerings. I still get chills when I hear the opening tones of "Dead Skin Mask." They are so at the top of their game, Slayer will never falter. Of all the biggies out there who have chosen to chase the dollar over staying true to the cause (ahem, Metallica, are you still with us?), Slayer still carries that flag and rams the sharp end of the pole into the hearts of those who forgot their roots. The new album *God Hates Us All* will prove to be a mighty new slab for all eager Slayerites to chew on for a while. At the show, of course, I decided to go the regular route of spending all my hardly-earned dough by standing in endless lines to get a 6 dollar Dixie cup o' beer, but let's just say I needed some inspiration. Well, thank God I took that course of action, as most of the bands were cookie cutter Korn Kob nibblets of metal dreck. Sorry. Is that too harsh? Well, too fuckin' bad. Stagnant X was great "waiting in line for the pisser" music and I missed the other one, so oops on me. Morbid Angel I did catch, however, and they murdered 'em. Literally. I heard from a security guard that someone was stabbed in the first ten minutes of the show. Good clean whole-some fun, folks! Nothing like a gutful of metal to go with an earful to boot! My good wishes go out to the victim of this senseless act, and to the knife wielding nutjob, if you wanna go stabbing people with something, try poking your finger into the back of someone that's going to really kick your ass. Chickenshit.

I got to slip backstage for a bit and hang out in the Slayer dressing room, so I apologize if you were looking forward to hear-

ing about Pantera. I spent so much time trying to sneak back there that I missed the Texan Titans altogether. Talked with Kerry very briefly, though, and then slipped over to the minibar and proceeded to clean them out of Coors Light and pepperoni pizza. Adam from Machine Head was there to direct the drinking traffic, which is always appreciated. Also in attendance was Mr Chuck Billy (Testament), who was looking very well indeed. He is through with his cancer treatments and is doing 100% better. Chuck Schuldiner (Death) on the other hand, is not doing too well. I'll go more into this later.

Roadrunner Records have been serving up some very



***I still get chills
when I hear the
opening tones of
"Dead Skin Mask."***

choice discs recently, and I have been raving about them for a month now. Fear Factory have given us *Digimortal*, and for this I am eternally grateful. FF have definitely shifted their sound into the new genre which I affectionately call Industrimetal. Catchy, huh? Whatever. It does tend to be a bit more melodic than I remember them being in the past, but no matter. It's so well crafted into an entire piece of work that it practically *cries* out for "keeper" status. I also heard Ill Niño, which totally kicked my butt all around the room until I was left weeping in the corner clutching what was left of my Tecate. Making great

use of their Latin roots, they've spit out a disc which reminds me of the impact that Sepultura and Ratos made on the metal scene with their Brazilian flavor-infused music. After hearing their *Revolution Revolución* CD, I knew it was destined for something big. Find this disc, buy it, play it, love it, bury it in the backyard, and hope it grows into a tree of metal from which you will harvest many more discs. It's just that good.

or is my writing just that bad? Hmmm. Also on the block was Chimera's new disc (put title here), which feels like a hand caught in a paper shredder! New metal is here and they don't care if you're frightened. These guys will chew you up and spit you out on the other side. Chimera just rivet you with hard-hitting sonic blasts and supercharged rhythms...over and over. A trio of discs that are a must-ask-mom-for-when-she-goes-to-Wal-Mart selection. Machine Head just dropped *Supercharger* this October 2nd; so prepare to be shocked back to reality.

The follow-up to *The Burning Red* (which has been shamefully ignored and underrated by the press for some reason), *Supercharger* will prove the prowess of Machine Head and their ability to continue to grow, evolve, and take us all along for the

HIT SQUAD

ride. One track in particular ("Bulldozer") starts the disc off by grabbing you by both ears, turning you around, and lobbing you into the pit with one of the most bone-crushing riffs I have heard in a great while. Brilliant. Now, the disc takes a while to grow on you, but if you're patient, you will find yourself engrossed, yet again, in Machine Head's world of pain. By the way, all four of these bands are heading out together on a mini-Roadrunner showcase tour, which should start in late September, so find out where and get your asses there. It guarantees to be a four-pack that will have you staggering home wetting yourselves.

Nuclear Blast have been riveting my skull with a nonstop barrage of metal discs which are not only leaving hundreds of tiny dents, but also keeping a smile on my face. Old-school Destruction have come back in full force to chainsaw your eardrums into oblivion! Their latest package of meaty metal, *The Antichrist*, scared me so badly that I'm writing this review from under my bed. This album puts the "heavy" back into heavy metal. "Thrash Till Death" starts you down the conveyor belt, moving ever closer to that skull saw that awaits at the end of the line. All hail the Butcher! Then, as "Bullets from Hell" spit chunks of your flesh from each side of your body, "The Heretic" puts you down for the meat packer. These guys are so adept at blending new school speed with that old school classic sound that they've achieved a status that almost prompts me to recommend them in the same ranks as Slayer and the likes. *The Antichrist*

will soon become a top contender in any list of this year's best. Word around the metal water cooler is that some "eerie" mishap at the factory produced exactly six hundred and sixty-six defective discs, when *The Antichrist* was being pressed. Did somebody forget to send Satan a royalty check?

Also from the mighty Nuclear Blast, Kataklysm have released *Epic: The Poetry of War*. This is a full-on, relentless attack on every aspect of your being. Packaging should include a towel to wipe away the sweat of exhaustion — even after one listen. The Canadian death metal band has been in existence now for ten years, and they sound as if they could go for another fifty without losing any momentum. *Epic* is a fitting title, as this disc contains metal sounds of epic proportions.

If I babble on too much about the old school metal, too frickin' bad! Just when you thought it was safe to play that Papa Roach MTV extended dance mix with Shania on backup vocals that was written for that Freddie Prinze Jr. movie soundtrack where the high school is being stalked by a psycho killer who wears a Scooby Doo mask who chases Reese Witherspoon down into the janitor's closet wearing panties and a bra, IT ISN'T! Tell your mama that you wanna be a real metalhead now, and beg her not to buy you anymore Linkin Park logs 'cause you are all grown up. These are my *drawings*. My name is Simon.

Yeah, we'll wake up Grandma, 'cause we're going to the "Thrash of the Titans" show! This show is the benefit for Chuck Billy (Testament) and Chuck Schuldiner (Death), and a great deal of old school metal bands got together (or back together, in some cases) to make some money for their cancer treatments. The line-up was as follows: Flotsam & Jetsam, Death Angel,



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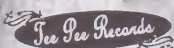
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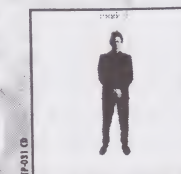
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Heathen, Sadus, Forbidden Evil, Exodus, Anthrax, S.O.D., Legacy, and ? I've seen a few reviews from some others who went to this show and were downing on it pretty hard. But to them I gotta say, "I think you missed the point entirely. "First off, I thought most of the bands sounded great! I mean, I saw a lot of these bands back in the day, and most of them really did improve with age. Exodus were a bit shaky, but my GOD! We're talking Bayloff, man! He's like Lemmy. He lives forever and ever and ever. He's like the Energizer bunny with an afro. Anyway, they were great. And the high point was Death Angel. THEY TORE IT UP! Mark Osegueda couldn't help talking in between each song about how stoked they were to be there and that it was a great event to help out the two Chucks, which was touching but a bit distracting. But hell, that's a small price to pay for a reunion of such epic proportions. It was if they had never split, really. Everyone was really on it. Sadus kicked ass, but man oh man, Heathen were tight as hell! Sure, a few original members here and there were M.I.A., but each band made a real effort and I was thoroughly impressed. Secondly, this was a benefit! Open your ears, you tired old fucks, I said BEN-E-FIT! Both Chucks have cancer and are in dire need of dough to get through this. And not to sound sappy, but this was really a bunch of friends who grew up playing in the same scene getting together, despite all the little and big reasons that bands break up, to show some solidarity and compassion for two fellow metal comrades who are in a fix. I still think it was one of the greatest shows I have ever been to for that reason alone. This was a Bay Area metal reunion, and that's no lie. It was. There were people there who I haven't seen in over fifteen years. There were group hugs with people who would have kicked you in the teeth for smiling at them ten years ago. Oh yeah, did I mention that all the beer was FREE backstage? Needless to say, being at a concert that ran well over seven hours was made all the easier with that kind of hospitality going.

I got to talk to Chuck Billy for a minute, and asked him a few drunken questions with all the tact I could muster.

MD: How do you feel about the outpouring of support for you and Chuck Schuldiner, with all the people coming together and putting this event together?

CB: It all started out with Walter (Morgan) wanting to get local bands together and throw a benefit for us, and I said "that's very cool." Then he asked me what bands I'd like to see play, so I started naming all these old school bands. And then every week someone would come to me and tell me that so and so said they'd play and then the next thing I knew, it had just grown into this big thing. I thought it was so killer that all these bands came through, no matter how big it got, you know? I don't need as much help as Walter ended up getting, so Chuck Schuldiner's family is basically going to get a lot of the money because he is doing pretty badly and his family has no health insurance. I've been fortunate enough to get through all this cancer shit, the chemo, pretty smoothy.

MD: How is Chuck Schuldiner doing?

CB: He's on an experimental drug that they were giving to him. Unfortunately, the other eleven people that were given the same drug basically got poisoned by it, so now he can't even walk or talk, and he's totally bedridden.

MD: Oh, man.

CB: Yeah, it's really messed up. His mom and the family are having a really hard time 'cause the first time he got the cancer,

they basically had to sell everything, including their house. Now it's come back and they're pretty much tapped out, so they've got nowhere else to turn.

MD: I guess that this event, which has sold out, and everyone who here is helping out by donating all the playing, will really help thanks to all the money it has generated.

CB: It really has. Chuck's family is gonna get some money to help them out a lot, and that's what I'm really grateful for. Because what I was going through, being bedridden like Chuck, was terrible, and I had no idea what to expect when I started on the chemo. You don't know what to expect at all, but I finished with my treatment this last week and I made it through pretty well. The tumor has shrunk considerably, and now I'm just waiting to find out if I have to get an operation to cut the rest of it out.

MD: I went to the website, and there is a lot of information on the website about how to contribute to you and Chuck Schuldiner. (www.thrashofthetitans.com)

CB: Anything that people contribute to the website definitely goes to Chuck and I, and mostly to him 'cause he needs it more than I do. Like I said, I have been fortunate to get through this. I was down for a year, but I feel pretty good right now. I feel bad for Chuck, though. He's on these experimental drugs, and when he and his sister flew to LA to Cedars Sinai with a credit card — they weren't gonna treat him. They were just gonna leave him in the waiting room.

MD: But he's getting treatment now? I mean, are the doctors hopeful?

CB: He is getting treatment, and the drugs did start to shrink the tumor, but he's very sick.

MD: With all of these bands coming together for this, it really has an old-school feeling of camaraderie that's quite amazing. Urrp! Sorry, but I think I'm going sappy on ya.

CB: Yeah, it's really a trip because the Native Americans have a tradition called a "Uweepee". It's when they get a group of people together to support someone who is sick or who just needs support, and the medicine man makes a ceremony out of it. A friend of mine, a Native American, told me that what we have here is a Uweepee of sorts. You have all these people supporting you and the cause and Chuck and the whole metal scene. A lot of these bands who wouldn't have gotten together for any other reason, even though this is a pretty fucked-up reason.

MD: Yeah, but it's outta love and...

CB: Yeah, there's been a lot of love displayed throughout the whole show. Even though I've been fortunate, there's been so much love in this venture that it's hard for me to express just how much I appreciate it all.

MD: Is there any message you want to give to any people in particular who have been instrumental in putting this together?

CB: My family and Chuck's family just wanna show how much we love everybody for participating in this thing. The crew, the lighting guys, the sound guys, the club owner, everybody has

come through and has contributed in one way or another. Everyone who has donated their time and has done whatever they could to make this happen deserves our thanks. It is so fucking awesome that bands who wouldn't even come and play together for money are here now. They think the whole thing is great. They're all dying to see this show, too. And Walter really made it happen. So it's all on Walter Morgan. And the timing is just right, too. I just finished my treatment last week, here's the show date, and I'm feeling good. I'm just glad everyone is here and could make it. It's like a big metal high school reunion.

What can I say? The man is pretty damn righteous! I did talk with some other folks like John Tempesta (Zombie, Testament, and Exodus), Mark Osegueda (Death Angel and Swarm), Phil from Vio-lence, Gary Holt from Eggs-at-Us, and a host of others, but my questions were *quite* asinine by that point. However, they all conveyed a similar heartfelt show of support for the two Chucks, which only drove the point home more that these guys all really care for each other and that there is a deep sense of community within this scene that was a small — but fiercely loyal — entity back in the early 80s. We still stand strong today. The promoter provided me with a list of a lot more that wanted to play, but were unable to due to the already lengthy lineup. Slipknot was one of the many big bands that were willing to fly out on their own nickel, but the promoter kindly declined, stating that the bill was already filled with bands who were made up of close friends. All the better, since it kept the feeling and the spirit closer to the point.

Someone mentioned Rouge Male to me in an email, but I gotta tell ya, what the hell happened to quality music? I mean, I can almost picture the scene. A producer and engineer in some swank-ass recording studio talking to some 16-year olds wearing reflective silver polyester dress shirts and black Dickies with some black-brushed leather loafers, about how all they need is one good hook and a CD cover with some chick with wires coming outta her cooch and L.E.D. lights in her eyes, and they gotta a surefire hit for MTV. Pardon me, but can you say, "crap with a twist of lime?" Plug me into a wall socket with a 120-Watt bulb in each ear and call me enlightenment, 'cause that can't be so unobvious that I'm the only one seeing it. Puleeze. Next stop, Crazytown! Everybody off!

If metal was a hat, would you wear it? Hell, I sure would. What that has to do with anything, I'll never tell. If a tiny monkey wearing a small red velvet coat and a little red fez ran up your back and whispered in your ear, "foo fiddle fee, po widdle me", would you leave your job and sell pencils at the airport for poetry? I just might. If Metallica decided to piss even more peo-

ple off by putting out a country record, would you buy it because you happened to like *Ride The Lightning*? Why? That would be ridiculous. Sometimes I have no idea why we even talk to each other. If you can't be serious, even for a moment, let's just call it off.

I was invited to go to a Metallica convention-type thingy at the Maritime Hall last Labor Day weekend. Since I have done t-shirt designs for them over the past twelve years and the promoters wanted to have me donate some of my artwork to charity in the name of this same convention, I agreed. Unfortunately, the charity turned out to be a wildlife preservation organization, which seemed to be quite odd. I mean, why are we giving money to an organization that helps protect the very animals that James Hetfield is trying to shoot on his hunting weekend trips? Anyway, this was bigger than I was, so I bowed my head and plunged forward. It was called Metallibash 2001, and even though it was a fan convention, it only cemented the fact that Metallica's popularity is waning. I hate to say it, but only about 95 people bought tickets to this event and it really just turned

out to be a big cocktail party. Don't get me wrong, I love to gab and drink and there was plenty of that goin' round. I met some really nice people who had spent a lump of cash to fly out from wherever and sit around talking about Metallica. There were folks from Kentucky, one guy from Turkey, and others from New York, Michigan, and Canada. I'm not sure, but I thought I overheard that there was a four-some there from Armenia, but they

were *definitely* from out of the country. I only pray that what the evening produced for them was *somehow* worth the long flight. There were absolutely no stands that featured hard-to-get memorabilia, Metclub (their official fan club) had a mammoth booth displaying all the goodies you could get if you forked out a wad of dough, and several "chapters" of the club had little set-ups advertising their organization. They raffled off some of the MacFarlane Metallica dolls, some of my artwork, and a few goodie bags at a dollar a ticket (which kinda bugged me, seeing as that they already shelled out 30 bucks to stand in line for a \$5 beer and sift through fan club brochures), but people bought tickets nonetheless. This was all well and good, but there was very little to warrant a trip out to the West Coast from Timbuktu.

They also had a tribute band called Creeping Death play, and despite the fact that they wore wigs to imitate their icons more accurately they pulled it off with deadeye accuracy. The playing was really awesome, so this was definitely one of the best "tribute" bands that I've seen in a while. Their set consisted of all the biggies for Metallica: "Creeping Death", "Fade To Black", "Enter Sandman", etc. Then, to top the whole sordid affair off with a big fat metal cherry on top, Lars Ulrich and Kirk Hammett showed up with entourages in tow to join the band and play a few of their own tracks. The scant crowd huddled as close as they could to

If Metallica decided to piss even more people off by putting out a country record, would you buy it because you happened to like "Ride The Lightning"?

catch a sight of the guys as they very earnestly played a small but well-received set. This was obviously the highlight of the evening, and I am extremely pleased that the band actually showed up and played even though it was not advertised and they were under no obligation to do so. A very gracious act on the part of Metallica. I'd be very interested to know if this will be the last one, at least the last non-official convention. If Metallica's music keeps going in the same direction, maybe a Metallica coffin won't be too farfetched an idea. Take that anyway you want to.

I also got to spend a few goofy moments with the men of Machine Head and asked them some questions which had little to do with the release of their upcoming disc "Supercharger."

MD: Why did you do a cover of the Police's "Message in a Bottle" on your last album, *The Burning Red*? Did you feel stranded on "Metal Island"?

Adam Duce: (laughs) We felt like we were about to get voted off "Metal Island", so we had to fuckin' send out our S.O.S.!

MD: You are going on a big Roadrunner showcase tour with some of your labelmates. Have you heard Ill Niño or Chimera yet?

Ahrue: That sounds like something you'd find on a menu in a Mexican restaurant.

MD: I gotta little too much Chimera in this one!

Ahrue: I'll have an Ill Niño with no Chimera!

Well, beyond that, the questions and answers were straightforward, serious, and in-depth. But I have no interest in boring you with them, and will only say that *Supercharger* is a great raw metal album that's worth buying and savoring slowly. The guys are psyched to get out there and kick some metal butt around the concert halls, and they'll be kicking your butt in a town near you (I guess it would have to be "near you" if your butt was being kicked, wouldn't it?), so be forewarned.

TOP 10 METAL ALBUM COVER MASCOTS:

10. Exodus' Wrex. Sorry fellas, I know most of you, but this was the bottom of the stack of "mascots". He only appeared for a very short time, during the end of the Exodus dynasty, but let's not blame our redheaded pal. I think Pushead drew this guy up, but it didn't come across as one of his more well thought-out designs. Hey, he made it to my top ten, so that's gotta say something, right?

9. DESTRUCTION's Mad Butcher. OK, these guys are from Germany and we have to give them some kind of leeway when it comes to knowing what kind of icons we as Americans might find strange. I mean, they probably grew up with a sausage in each hand, so a "mad butcher" kinda fits, ya know? It could be a scary mascot, with all that chopped up meat and the bloody apron and that cleaver and all. Beware of the Mad Butcher! He will make schnitzel of us all if we don't bow to his metal fury! Well...maybe not...

8. LED ZEPPELIN's "Swan Song" naked guy with wings. Growing up I saw this drawn so many times on the backs of people's backpacks, school binders, lockers, etc..that it almost made me nauseous! It was such a great icon, yet trying to draw the tilted back head was such a matter of precision and the fact that all

those who attempted to recreate this on whatever garment or accessory were most likely high as a kite on that hippie hay, it invariably came out looking as if the head had been lopped off in mid-flight. Such an unfitting tribute to the mighty Zep, yet it stands out in my memory as one of the longest-lasting icons. Oh yeah, I guess you could call it "the devil's lawn clippings" too, if you like.

7. RIOT's baby seal. Yeah, baby! New York's finest contribution to the metal game was Riot. "Fire Down Under" is perhaps one of my all time faves when it comes to responding to the query: "can you recommend an album that I probably never heard before that should sufficiently rock my world?" Anyway, when you try to rationally figure out how in the hell a metal band would choose a white baby seal as the symbol of heavy metal might, you might find yourself rocking back and forth in a dark basement room somewhere. I decided it was best just to listen to the music and totally disregard the small, soon-to-be-clubbed furry beast. Maybe you should too.

6. DIO's demon guy with chain. He seemed to only last for a few albums and some select singles, but for some reason this statuesque muscular devil who towered over the drowning reverend or the throngs of Egyptian metal hordes constituted an icon of sorts. When I was growing up and going to these concerts on a regular basis, banners were being painted by any schmuck with a paintbrush and a bed sheet (sorry, mom). Anyway, Dio was one of those bands which attracted artistic schmucks, and the Dip demon was prime subject matter. Soon Ron turned his tiny back on the devil and gave way to dragons, castles, and tiny upcurled elfin boots.

5. ANTHRAX's "NOT" Man. Where he came from, I think only Charlie Benante (Anthrax's drummer) knows for sure. If I'm not mistaken, it was Charlie who penned the "NOT" guy first, although he is the namesake of Scott "Not" Ian, the founding guitarist. The silly bastard shows up now and then, but as the band sought out other venues for recognition, Mr. Not was soon to be "not" around as much.

4. MEGADETH's Vic Rattlehead. Now here is a mascot that has stuck with us through thick and thin. The heavy metal version of "Hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil", this little metal monkey has been on our back since his first appearance (in the flesh, so to speak) on "Business Is Good". He's gone from selling real estate, to exposing Hangar 18, to spreading nuclear waste everywhere. Mr. Mustaine seems to have left our pal Vic on the waste pile, but I'm sure he will return, as needed, to reinstall the "old feel" of Megadeth.

3. DANZIG's demon skull. OK, perhaps I am more guilty of committing a metal faux pas than anyone for mentioning this, but Danzig's demon skull has found its way tattooed into the flesh of more metalheads than perhaps any other icon in metal history. I say this because it happens to be on my forearm as well. It is the definition of a classic symbol, and even if our beloved Danzig has slipped into a comic book persona, I still refer to his heyday as the reason behind the branding. It used to carry some weight a while ago, but now it hangs there like the name of an ex-girlfriend or some ill-fated seagull shit. I try and divert the jeers by retorting "yeah, well I got it back when Samhain were around, it just happened to become his logo after the fact". Yeah, right.

2. MOTÖRHEAD's Dog skull mask. It was a tough call to make this number two, as it truly deserves to be a co-headliner,

HIT SQUAD

but I'm going to risk it. Forgive me Lemmy, as I'm sure you will be crushed by my decision. This icon has definitely been tattooed more than any other metal icon ever! Oh, the majesty of the mask! It has taken on many guises, yet never has it changed from its pure form. Just like the band and its music. A representation of the British bulldog clad in heavy metal, this emblem epitomizes the tough "never give up" credo that Motörhead has upheld since day one. Its resistance to change or even be swayed has mirrored the idealism of its founder, Lemmy Kilmeister. Not to get away from the point, but the greatest quote I have ever heard about the king (yes, I mean Lemmy) was when a (ahem) journalist called him

a dinosaur in the business. Lemmy responded, "I may be a dinosaur, my friend, but I'm a fucking Tyranasaurus Rex!" Lemmy is God, let there never be any mistake about that.

1. IRON MAIDEN's Eddie. What can I say? Here's the reason for my career choice. I started out reproducing the longhaired, zombified, axe-wielding metal maniac on every army jacket worn in the Bay Area school system. Of course, Maiden were musically appealing and could tear it up with the best of 'em, but they also had the best mascot ever — hands down! Every single, every LP cover, every poster showcased the eerie figure of Eddie, and

his exploits kept us picking up whatever we found him on. I started to feel a bit sorry for the poor bastard when they removed his brain on *Piece of Mind* and then later made a once fearful vision of terror into a mere tree. Alas, my artistic mentor, Derek Riggs, who was the madman behind the paintbrush which gave life to our hero, has parted ways with Maiden (due to "creative differences"), so any new appearances by the Edster will be a cheap imitation of the real McCoy. Mr. Riggs told me (after discussing my sordid affiliation with Metallica) that "there must be

some way to sell the fans merchandise without all the bloody rock stars getting in the way all the time". I said "Amen to that!" Please visit his website and absorb the greatness of one of the true rockstars of the artworld: www.derekriggs.com

Well, so much for metal this month. I would like to end this mad parade of drivel with a big word of thanks to the

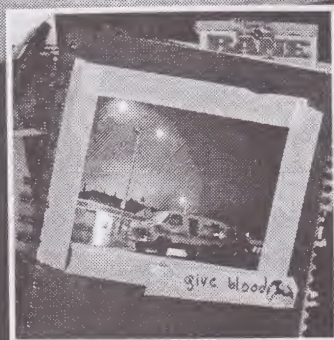
Sleazegrinder and Damien for all their kind words, as well as "a wee bit of light" to show me the way. This month also marked one of the most horrendous terrorist acts ever perpetrated on American soil, which took the lives of thousands of innocent people. In response to this, I will bow my head and think of the victims and hope for peace for us all. When American metal is attacked, we must all rise to the occasion. We must prevail in this situation, because I'll be damned if I'm gonna be forced to listen to any of that weak-ass Afghan metal crap, bands like Islamica, Iron Muslim, and Hamas Priest. Screw that! ☺

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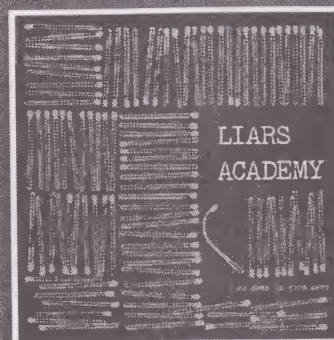
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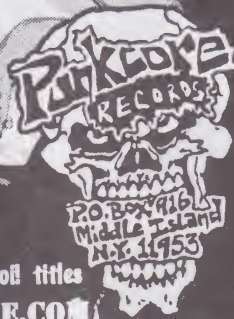
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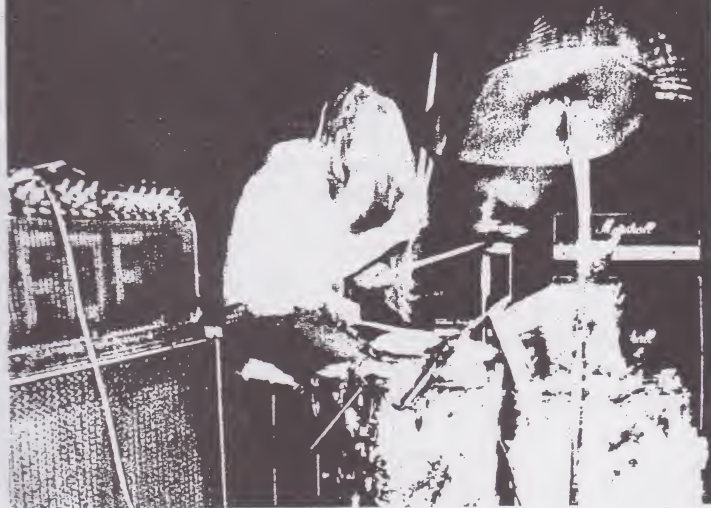
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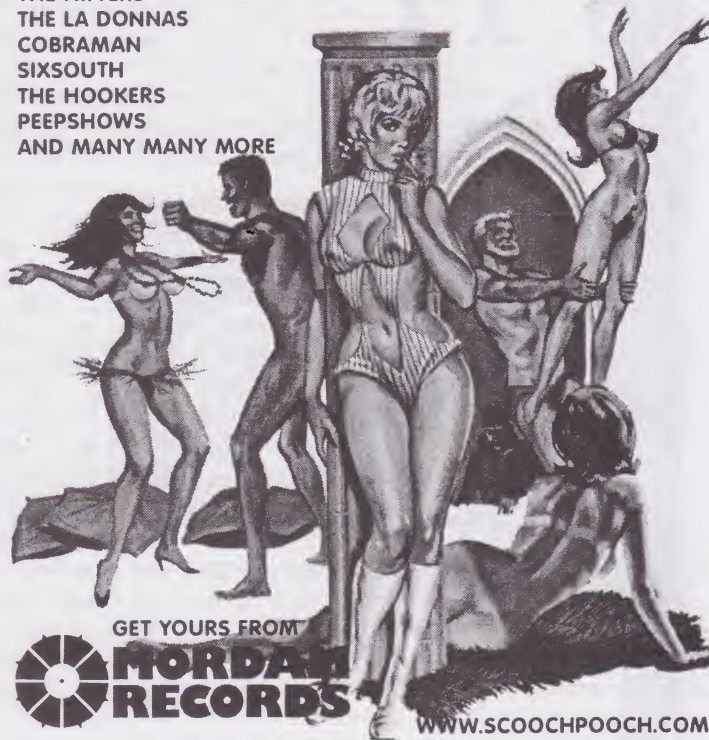


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"HUSS" "HUSS" "HUSS" "HUSS" "HUSS!" I smacked the gay cowboy upside the head. I kicked him in the gut..and he doubled over at the waist. I quickly grabbed his neck and jammed his head between my legs with his mouth facing the floor. I locked my arms under his stomach, lifted him up off of the ground, and dropped him on his head so hard that the brim of his swishy-looking hat covered his nose and eyes.

We weren't in an alley or the men's room at the Greyhound bus depot. We were in the midst of a few

hundred music lovers at Emo's in Austin. It was the finale of my

band RANCID VAT's set, and the guy working the gay cowboy bit was an ex-band member who I had pre-arranged our little dance with. Most of the time when we play Live, I don't need to arrange to have a dude in the audience to apply a devastating wrestling maneuver to. I asked to guess whether I had really delivered a piledriver to a gay cowboy who had wandered in off of 6th Street, most of the fans would've probably just shrugged. It was the weekend of the 2001 CONFEDERACY OF SCUM SUPERSHOW, so that's the sort of thing you see all weekend long. Sometimes the blood and roughhousing are for real, and sometimes it's pure entertainment. It goes without saying, though, that people attending were a lot smarter than the average dumbass out to see a night of bands. As in past years, COS fans came from all over the damned place to be there. Most of them follow the bands year round and know they are going to see the best couple nights of live music all year. "HUSS...HUSS...HUSS" I grabbed a guy with a crewcut by the head. I didn't know him, but he didn't fight me off. I pressed my bloody forehead against his and smeared a vague splotch of blood on

him. Back when I was on stage a few minutes ago, I had juiced with a broken beer bottle. It's a carnival trick that's not dangerous...most of the time. I've gotten heat from a couple people (Jello for one) over the years, who say that I'm copying my good friend Jeff Clayton by juicing. Well, the truth is that Jeff Clayton didn't invent juicing. It's been a staple of wrestling matches for generations. When Jeff juices he RIPS HIS FUCKING HEAD open, whereas I only puncture mine. He also dives through flaming tables and wraps himself in sheets of barbed wire on occasion. Having appeared on several records and CDs with Jeff, I feel that I have license to generate a little excitement by spilling some blood, even on a night in which ANTISEEN is appearing later. In our hometown of Hostile City USA, fans DEMAND blood one way or other — at wrestling matches, hockey games,

and casual street brawls. I feel it's important to do our best at the Supershow.

"HUSS...HUSS...HUSS...HUSS," the crowd chants along with our singer the COSMIC COMMANDER OF WRESTLING. While I've been engaged in delivering blood and kissing females who haven't run away in terror, Cosmo has been testifying about the late great BRUISER BRODY, who just happened to hail from Texas. Meanwhile, the band..my wife Marla, guitarist Jimmy Satan, and drummer Eric Flawless drone on with an intentionally repetitive melody. On this night they expected me to return to the stage to officially end the set. I never did. I walked out the door to the merchandise area between the twin rooms of Emo's and sat down next to my kid Elvis at our table. "HUSS...HUSS...HUSS...HUSS," I barked a few more times at no one in particular, slapping my wrist with my palm upraised just like Bruiser Brody used to do. I look around the patio area. A few strangers who were ignoring our set give me funny looks as if I'm crazy, or at least very drunk. I am both. So I turn to them and give 'em a few more "HUSS..HUSS..HUSS..HUSSes," just for good measure. "Hey, Pa...want a towel to wipe your blood off with?," asks Elvis politely. "No thanks, it's better for business this way...YOU know that!," I reply, a bit surprised he bothered to ask.



A lot of us make big sacrifices to be at the Supershow every year. I located my blood relatives (I was adopted) earlier this year, and it came down to either visiting them for the first time or being with my "other" family at the Supershow. The family I chose to see was never really in doubt.

It took me a couple weeks to gather and pack merchandise to sell in Austin in order to partially pay for our trip. We had several boxes and bags to check on the airplane. We had to drive 100 miles to an airport in Baltimore to make a direct flight to Austin. I awoke with bloodshot eyes after only two hours of sleep and headed for the airport. Jimmy and his girlfriend made the ride in our van, since they were on the same flight. I demanded, like a tyrant, that we be the first people to arrive at the departure gate. We were flying on Southwest Airlines, which has a screwy policy of not guaranteeing seats. You have to fucking take a number when you got to the airport. THAT'S FUCKED UP! If we could have changed airlines we would have. I threw a childish temper tantrum and threatened not to go. Why? Because I can't bear to sit in the middle seat...thee WHISKEY REBEL MUST have his window seat. Ever since I saw an Asian family traveling with what looked like a stinking foot bath board the same flight as me, I've been paranoid. I'd freak out, shit myself, and throw the payload at the flight attendant if some dude next to me on a plane started up his foot bath ritual. I can't stand being on the aisle, either. I've flown a lot over the years, and have been seated next to screaming babies (several times!), a Mormon missionary, and overly amiable hippies who wouldn't shut the fuck up. I need to sit in the window seat with a blanket over my head during take-off.

I almost died 15 years ago when an airplane I was traveling in lost an engine 5,000 feet over frozen Arctic tundra (you can read about it in my book "JOB JUMPER") so in my eyes I'm entitled to be a big pussy about flying. Showing up hours early qual-

Thinkin' & Drinkin' w/ The Whiskey Rebel



ified me to pick a window seat. I sat down and instinctively checked for a barfbag. Like I had told Jimmy earlier, a guy who had never flown, I've never heaved on a plane. But if I didn't have a bag to puke in, I probably would. I DID have an hour-long nosebleed once that wouldn't clot due to the altitude. The flight to Texas wasn't TOO bad.

Once in Texas we Irwins parted company with Jimmy and his girl, who were heading straight for the "Super 8" motel that everybody would start showing up at in the next day or two. We picked up our rental car and drove 30 miles south to the town of San Marcos to spend a quiet night in anticipation of a few nights of absolute liver-twisting revelry.

I was immediately impressed by San Marcos when I saw a selection of beer kegs at the town grocery store! I settled on a 12-pack of Tecate (hey, I'm a sucker for Mexican beer, except for Corona) and a 12-pack of a really cheap beer called Sports beer that Marla and Elvis declared undrinkable.

After a peaceful, mildly drunken night we headed back up to Austin. Widowmaker from COCKNOOSE had selected the motel, and it was a fucking great choice. The owner insisted on personally picking up booze at the liquor store for the C.O.S. early arrivals so that we wouldn't get lost in the ghetto (YAY!). He also didn't give a fuck what hour of the day or night we assembled by the pool. For three nights the pool party went on 'til dawn. We checked in on Thursday, which was the day before the Supershow. Several other C.O.S. bandmembers had also shown up early, and a lot of us wound up at that night at Emo's.

The first event of the evening though was a WHISKEY REBEL book reading at a great record store called SOUND EXCHANGE on Guadalupe Street. Even though not a single C.O.S. Brother or Sister made the one-mile trip from poolside at the Super 8 to see me pontificate (hell, they get to see it all the time on a one-to-one basis!), a couple of dozen people I enjoyed meeting from Chicago, Richmond, Italy, Canada, and a lot of other places showed up. Some guys who had been to a couple of readings in San Francisco were there. It was fun and I got to sign a few books. Free beer was provided. It wasn't as "literary" as you might think — it was more about drinking and bellowing and cursing bosses than about sensitive emotional hogwash.

I walked into Emo's alone while Marla and El went to eat. I CAN'T eat before I hang out at a club, because when I eat I have to SHIT. Sometimes quite a bit. I'm well known for that. So, if I'm going out I don't eat. My wife and son agreed to get me something to go and leave it in our rental car for later. Because I had farted up a storm in bed the night before, Marla declared: "You're NOT having beans again tonight!" She felt compelled to select my food for me that night as if I was a little child. What the fuck, we've been married way over 20 years. If she farted as much as I do, I would've either plugged her ass up or started wearing noseplugs to bed.

Anyway, I walked in and saw three guys watching the door. Unlike a lot of my friends from bands, I don't "expect" to be let in for free to a club. I was reaching for my wallet, but one of the three guys recognized me and nodded. He waved the other two

WHISKEYREBEL

off and stamped my hand. A good sign. I bellied up to the bar and began drinking Pabst Blue Ribbons. A few people brought shots up to me. I talked for probably two hours to Tom O'Keefe, who was ANTISEEN's bass player for years. He just happened to be there on a night off from his road manager duties with an act that was playing a huge coliseum in San Antonio the next night. I promised to say "hey" to the boys from Brutalsville for him.

After probably twenty or so beers and five or six shots (I don't count 'em), Marla drove Elvis and I the mile or so uphill back to the Super 8. A small group of a half dozen was hanging by the pool. I returned to our room to bolster myself with the food Marla had selected for me. NO BEANS, huh?

Well, I opened up the styrofoam container and saw a scoop of beans and a scoop of rice. Marla figured it was no big deal, since it was ONLY a little scoop of beans. Hardly more than a big bite. What she didn't know was that the innocent-looking beef strips in the largest portion of

the container were actually in a pool of BEAN SAUCE. Lots of thick bean sauce. My wife, who had vowed not to put up with another night of anal fireworks, had mistakenly fed me a bean dish that made the night before seem tame. After a couple early morning hours yakking by the pool, I climbed into the small motel double bed already full of uncomfortable gas. BRAPPPPPPP!! BRAPPPPPPPPP!! All night long, I suffered from that dose of beans. I got up fifteen or so times to drink water. It's a good thing that I wear J.C. Penney's underpants when I sleep, or the sheets would've been painted brown. What could Marla say? It was all HER fault. I slept until 4:00 PM the next day. When I awoke I stiff leg-walked into the shower and cleansed the burning anal juices from my hole. After a couple of bowel movements and a new pair of shorts I was ready for another night at Emo's.

This was to be the most fun night because we didn't actually have to undergo the work of playing. We did have several boxes of merchandise to haul to the club, though. Emo's thankfully provided lights and tables outdoors so that we could hawk our wares. A high percentage of C.O.S. bands seem to sell a lot of their own merchandise, D.I.Y.-style. I think it's a matter of not trusting flaky distributors in many cases. The result is that you can find lots of good shit at the annual Supershow you'd NEVER find in a record store in your hometown.

One by one I began to see friends from C.O.S. Bands, and of course several friends who travel from far away every year to come to see the big spectacle. I need to take a moment here to point out that there is a fundamental difference between C.O.S. Supershow and other multiple band bills. There are some great weekends' worth of bands to be enjoyed at events in various parts of the country that at first glance seem similar. The biggest difference is that the bands ordinarily aren't made up of friends. Lots of them are bitter rivals within a certain genre, when you

It's a good thing that I wear J.C. Penney's underpants when I sleep, or the sheets would've been painted brown.

come right down to it. Rock and roll is a very competitive game, and many of the players in the game are egotistical sociopaths with an "I'll do anything to get signed" attitude. You don't see ANY OF THAT from anybody at the C.O.S. Supershow. There's a bit of occasional petty feuding here and there between particular C.O.S. members, but 95% of us would take a beating for one another. The band members deliberately pull their claws in since so many of us are old friends. Even though a few club owners have worried over the years, we KNOW there isn't going to be any "trouble" at the Supershow. There are simply too many of us C.O.S. brethren there to stop it.

The first band the first night was a great Austin band called the BULEMICS. They are headliners in any club all over the country, but that doesn't matter at the C.O.S. Supershow because it's OUR NIGHT; it's like a family reunion. If ZZ fucking TOP came down to play, they'd have to play before the C.O.S. member bands. Marla and I were trading off on watching our merch display; since I had seen an entire kickass BULEMICS set a few months ago she got to see them this time. Not only do they have great songs, they're energetic as hell and do a good job of creating an unpredictable atmosphere, as if all hell is about to break loose at any moment.

Next up was BEFORE I HANG from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. It was my turn to leave the table, and I got to see several songs including their opener, a cover of the MENTORS' "Free Fix for a Fuck". Walt and Joel, on guitar and bass, have anchored the band through thick and thin for years. Singer Dave is a totally unpredictable, charismatic wildman. He might puke on the audience, or he might rear back and bellow the words perfectly. Walt and Joel sort of unleash him and follow his lead.

Back outside I shook hands with a lot of people from all over the fucking place who came up to the table. Books sold well, but many people who came up to talk had already read it. Likewise there were many *Hit List* and *Carbon 14* readers at the show who regularly read my columns. I was happy to see that a helluva lot of 'em were women.

The first C.O.S. band to play were the TUNNEL RATS from New Hampshire. They always tickle my ribs, since they're such a lovable bunch of functioning alcoholics. Their songs are short, catchy, and opinionated as fuck. Duke juiced early in their set and rolled around in a dangerous looking pile of glass. Not to worry — they've been at it a long goddamned time. I bobbed my head along to their set and wished I could see them play more often. Damn, there are too many C.O.S. bands to stay in everyday contact with all of them. I feel like I'm missing something because I can't. The TR's not only play a mean set, but they are

classy drinkers by the pool...veteran albies.

By the next break between bands I've had more beers than I can possibly count, and I'm just getting started. Every now and then, some fine person walks up with a shotglass full of whiskey. "FUCKIN' WHISKEY REBEL," they yell. I knock it back. They'll never know how much I appreciate the shots and the greeting. Marla and I suffered through many years of hatred and disrespect in Portland, Oregon. We paid our fucking dues in a third-rate town that is convinced that it's hot shit. The music has changed a lot over the years. We've gone full circle from wanting to bury rock and roll to being one of its last defenders. Otherwise, the attitude hasn't wavered. We push buttons and piss people off in our live shows. During the last few years it's gotten so easy that we've been banned from playing most places locally in Philly. We couldn't find a club to play an appropriate 20th anniversary show at. Oh well, I'll settle for shots and beers and drunk motherfuckers yelling "Whiskey Fucking REBEL!" wherever I go.

COCKNOOSE from Lawrence, Kansas was in top form — as usual. They are one of the best bands I've ever seen when it comes to building up their songs for maximum enjoyment live. I could write pages about their perfect timing. Of course, it helps to have such a great bunch of songs to work with. Even a mighty intellect such as mine is challenged to appreciate every slight nuance of what they do. Every fart, every word, every expression means something, and it's up to us the audience to figure it all out while being bulldozed by their fanny-whomping sounds.

LIMECELL closed out the night with a set that was the equivalent of a double shot of whiskey after you're already three sheets to the wind. Since they're also from Philly, I've seen them so many times over the years with only a single (though very effective) guitar attack.

With two guitars they are a big fucking machine, a goddamned machine of the sort that bands like B.T.O. were always touted to be but rarely were. Of all the bands that weekend, they are the band with the BIG-ASS scrap-steel-steamroller sound.

Back to the motel. This time Marla has wisely provided me with carefully refrigerated and non-fart inducing Kentucky Fried Chicken. I've sucked down twice the alcohol it usually takes to send me to passout land, but this is the goddamned SUPERSHOW. Out to the pool for a while. A weird thing happens there. Some dumbass that isn't in town to see the Supershow, some Leonardo Dicaprio lookalike, comes running out of his poolside room in his shorts; he winds up sucker-pushing Benny from Limecell, who is wearing his street clothes into the fucking pool. Benny plays it cool and somehow restrains himself from crushing the little 'pinprick's skull. It would simply be too easy, and besides that his bandmate Bob is laughing as hard as anyone. Jeff Skipski begins preaching to the guilty nitwit, as his friends come running from their room to either retrieve him or start some shit. Elvis and I head back to the room. I am drunk

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Kentucky Fried Chicken.***

in public at a motel pool at 5:00 AM, and El is underage and in an unfamiliar city that could have weird juvenile laws. I can sense that the cops will be there soon. We peek out of our window to make sure we aren't needed in a brawl. Happily, Leo's friends hauled his drunken ass away without further incident.

I attempt to sleep, but keep waking up and hearing what sounds like a bunch of drunks pogoing on beds and bouncing off the walls in the room next door. Then I remember who's in that room — Jason and his buddies from San Francisco. They didn't come to Texas to sleep or to watch cartoons on the motel TV. I plug my least stuffed-up ear with a pillow and drift off to sleep. In a few hours Marla is bouncing off the walls of our room, anxious to see something of Austin other than our motel room and Emo's. Luckily she found some other people to go with. I wake up about 4:00 PM when she gets back to the room with my pre-show meal.

I'm a very delicate fellow on the day of the night I play a show of any magnitude. Since we aren't playing until about midnight, I have to make sure that I peak on the right blend of alcoholic fuel at exactly the right time. The previous two nights I had drunk what I usually drink in a week, so it had been a busy week. I also have to eat early and eat wisely. That means no god-damned beans or diarrhea-inducing spicy chow. It'd be awkward to have to delay our set so I could run down 6th Street looking for a place to take a crap. I sure as hell never count on crapping at a club we play at. Any place that will book the likes of us is guaranteed to have a demolished or plugged commode. I eat something light about 5:30 PM, drink a couple pure COORS to purify my body, and determined to sip 'em slowly until it was time to take the stage. Until then, no whiskey shots — during the set, or afterwards, I'd start lapping it up.

About 8:00 we hauled our guitars and several boxes of merchandise down to the club. I was really organized for once. Set lists written...merchandise neatly sorted. People started up early buying stuff. GOOD. If they didn't, we couldn't afford to come every year. I woundup signing lots of books and having my picture taken with a lot of Supershow attendees. Somebody brought me a double shot of something that looked like whiskey. "I CAN'T DRINK THIS BEFORE I PLAY!" I said. A handful of people around the table looked at me really funny, and then started yukking it up. They were sure I must be kidding. "Aren't you the Whiskey Rebel?," asked the guy who was thoughtful enough to bring me the shot. "HELL YEAH!" I fired back. Then I took the shot and knocked it right down, realizing that it was ridiculous for me to try to hold back for even five minutes this weekend. Where do I get such stupid notions?

The LOWER CLASS BRATS, an Austin band, started things off. I had never heard them, but they turned out to be pretty good. A jolly bunch of fuck-ups. Their singer BONES walked up to my table and greeted me with a snotty "FUCK YOU." I think it was meant to be a warm greeting, since I've met him before. I get email like that, e.g., "FUCK YOU, WHISKEY REBEL!" When I take offense, it always turns out that the "fuck-you"er liked me. Maybe guys who do this think that G.G. greeted HIS pals with "FUCK YOU!" What the fuck, I used to know a couple bosom buddies from Tucson who greeted each other with hard slaps and headbutts. I warmly greeted Bones in return. If he really DOES hate me, I bet he was confused at least.

HAMMERLOCK took the stage next. They were due to fly out early the next morning to play at a big Hell's Angels' party back in the Bay Area. What a busy damned weekend for them. I barely had a chance to talk to them. I looked around the room while they were playing. The place was packed. Well into their set,

WHISKEYREBEL

Alan from HELLSTOMPER, Jeff from ANTISEEN, Widowmaker from COCKNOOSE, and I took the stage and called BEFORE I HANG back up; it was time for a double induction into the C.O.S. Lot's of back slapping and hugging took place. It took three guys to drag a passed out Dave from Before I Hang onto the stage to be inducted. Afterwards I wound up singing a Simon Stokes song with HAMMERLOCK. Then it was back out to give my wallet, glasses, etc., to Elvis to hold during our set. 45 minutes later I was outside yelling "HUSS...HUSS...HUSS" at some confused Texans.

Next up was HELLSTOMPER. They've been incredibly prolific the last year or two, and now have their act completely down. I remember Alan having to start from scratch a few years ago and replace guys from the original lineup, so he deserves these easy, good years as a payback for his determination and guts. He no longer has to carry the entire load..he hasn't had to since finding the current bunch of guys, who all contribute in big ways. Hailing from Chattanooga, they are the perfect blend between Lynyrd Skynyrd and Grandpa Jones.

The last band of the night was ANTISEEN, formerly of Charlotte, North Carolina but now residing in Brutalsville. Marla watched the first half of their set, and then came out to give me a chance to go in. The first song I saw was a cover of "Beat on the Brat," a tribute to the late Joey Ramone. Sometimes ANTISEEN takes time to introduce songs and uses props (usually dangerous ones!) and lots of special guests. Other times, like on this night, they just blaze into one song after another after another. Austin has been a big town for them for years and a large number of locals ate it all up, along with those of us who had traveled a long way to get there. ANTISEEN closed out the Supershow on a good note.

I sold a few more armloads of CDs and magazines, and then packed up to head back to the motel for one final early morning of drinking by the pool. When we pulled into the parking lot, people were EVERYWHERE. I'd say at least thirty were by the pool, and dozens were leaning over railings or seated on window ledges smoking, drinking, and bullshitting. I went around from room to room apologizing to people I hadn't had a chance to visit with properly over the weekend. I was amazed at how many of my friends were flying or driving hundreds of miles home in just a matter of hours.

I wound up sitting outside of our room talking with my old pal the Widowmaker for awhile. He was the guy who thought up the notion of the C.O.S. in the first place, many years ago. In the beginning it was his band COCKNOOSE, ANTISEEN, and us. Now there are so many bands that it's become impossible to stay in touch with them all...or even to remember the names of every band member. I was glad to see that he was happy with the way the show went. Soon a dozen or so drunks from all over the country and Europe gradually gathered around us. Some were staggering and slurring their words. A gal bared her breasts and did a little dance for some reason. Some of the guys wondered out loud whether the lady who had serviced many of them in one of the rooms the night before was giving it away again. I poured a few more beers down and drank some Wild Turkey that Doug from Antiseen offered. Somebody else passed around a fifth of Southern Comfort. Then, knowing that we had to make checkout time the next morning, I said goodbye to one and all.

The next morning was brutal. I was sitting in misery on the

HIT SQUAD

bedspread when Russ from Cleveland knocked on the door. I had a video I needed to get to him. My head hurt really badly...if it hadn't been partially numb from all the alcohol still in my system, I bet it REALLY would have hurt. I couldn't think or talk to Russ, and instead gave him a half-assed wave as Marla tried to explain. Sorry, RUSS! We eventually got out of there after encountering only a couple of smiley, well-intentioned people who wanted to talk...even though I myself could not.

A few days later we were driving from San Antonio back to Austin a day before we were due to fly home. It was still morning. I turned on the radio to listen to the news for the first time in days. It was THAT morning: September 11th, 2001. For some reason, Texas radio wasn't reporting exactly WHAT had happened. All they would say was that a disaster had occurred. I actually thought for awhile that a nuclear attack was underway. They simply wouldn't say anything specific, and we didn't have a TV. When we finally heard what had happened I put my thinking cap on while driving north on I-35. I correctly surmised that our plane wasn't going to leave the next day; I also recognized the fact that our rental car was suddenly a hot commodity and that we didn't DARE turn it in. We'd probably be driving it home. We spent two minutes debating whether or not we should be heroes and rescue Jimmy and Curley-Ann, who were also stuck. It was going to be a long drive home, and it was a small car.

We did the right thing and drove straight to their room at the Super 8 to pick them up. While waiting for them to pack, I began to accurately envision many hazards we'd encounter on the drive home — gas prices would probably be jacked up by opportunists (to \$4 per gallon in parts of Arkansas) and we'd see stranded travelers in droves at transportation centers. That's why we wisely avoided them as long as we could. We phoned the rental car company and were luckily given permission to return the car without penalty back up north. The five of us crammed into the tiny car and pointed it up I-35. We were all anxious to get back home, but for some reason none of us were in TOO BIG A HURRY to get there. We took our time and stopped in Texarkana, Nashville (where we left our passengers a few days early for a wedding they had planned to go to), and Roanoke overnight. We felt safe driving through the South. We listened to radio reports for hours, and each of us wondered about friends who might've been caught in the sneak attack and killed. I don't have the space to go into my views on all the angles and aspects of this disaster. You can read more of my drunken, lunatic, war-mongering ramblings at my internet diary: <http://home.conectiv.net/~whskyreb/index.html>

My basic position is this: I'm an alcoholic, antisocial, radical agnostic without any political affiliation. It annoys me when Christians try to make this a battle between "GOD" and "ALLAH". However, we live in a country where Christians outnumber everyone else combined 9 to 1. If the majority wants to sing "God Bless America" at ballgames, then it's up to me to choose whether or not I want to go. That's DEMOCRACY, right? I have no criticism whatsoever of anyone who feels compelled to wave a flag or declare their love for this country.

Like I said, I'm a diehard agnostic. If I were a joiner I'd probably be a satanist. I admire the writings of the late, great Anton LaVey. I've learned over the years which Christian sects are the most tolerant and which are filled with the biggest ass-

holes. Likewise I'm educated, in my own way, in the ways of world religions. To all those apologists for the terrorists who are pleading for an "end to the cycle of violence" and urging a vague kissy-face approach to the hijackers who committed thousands of random murders, I say HAH!! You're the kind of boobs that made Hitler possible.

I respect the right of all sincere pacifists to express themselves at a time like this, and I only WISH their good intentions would be answered in kind by the enemy. However, we are dealing with self-righteous kooks here...nutcases who don't allow alcohol, drugs, homosexuality, women's rights, or dissension AT ALL in their part of the world. Men are forbidden to shave (!), and women have to wear those stupid antiquated veils. Even Christians in America aren't THAT fucking bad! I was raised by fundamentalists, so I SHOULD KNOW! When these crackpots kill five or ten or fifty people in random sneak attacks on overseas military bases, then you may have an argument that whole-sale war should be avoided. In this case, we're talking about THOUSANDS of innocent people killed on our own soil.

The enemy has publicly declared their desire to annihilate us. The victims of the WTC attack weren't given the luxury of being "held for trial". So DON'T set out to hold Bin Laden or his followers for trial. Annihilate him and his supporters with a minimum of loss for our forces. Take them all out, as many as possible. If his children and grandchildren who survive want to take up the struggle years from now, so be it. Send them to Paradise too, if they haven't learned better when the time comes. And even if it comes down to innocent Muslims thousands of miles away losing their lives in the struggle, well, that's preferable to innocent people who I might actually know (including me) being killed here in my own country. When we are no longer threatened by a Jihad, go ahead and try to make peace between peoples of differing religions worldwide. Yeah, GO AHEAD AND TRY! The obvious solution to me is for everybody to DROP all the useless barbaric religions.

There are plenty of people who are trying to twist this struggle to fit into the familiar "distribution of wealth" arguments which always blame Americans for being greedy rich fucks. But, how many of the thousands who died in the WTC were in the same Range, financially speaking, as filthy rich Osama Bin Laden? If you're looking for conventional left-wing catch-all theories to apply in this case, you're out of luck. If you lefties think I'm a righty based on what I've said so far, well, you're wrong. I don't like Bush much more than most of you do. For the record, though, I'd probably have even less confidence in Gore in this situation. I'll admit it's scary watching Bush's televised addresses. Luckily, he's got an experienced crew backing him up who are pulling all the strings behind the scenes. Bush is merely a figurehead.

Bottom line: if this really is a war between hardline Muslims and Christians, most of whom are nominal, I'll side with the Christians any fucking day. At least a majority of them are willing to let me DRINK. Not to mention the fact that they want to SAVE ME, NOT KILL ME!

One last thing. If you don't get anything else from my above remarks, pay attention to this: the Whiskey Rebel has had several Middle Eastern friends over the years. Most of them are ecstatic about the freedoms they receive in this country. DON'T FUCK WITH THEM! I mean it! ☺

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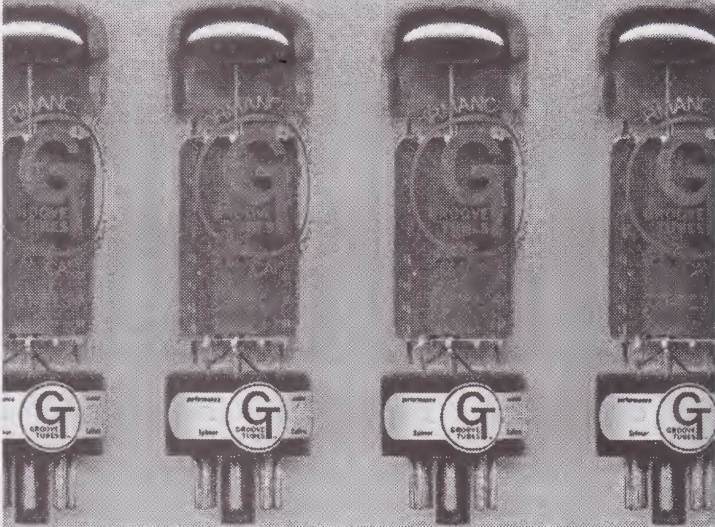
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This column is late. A lot of my columns are late, but what can I say? I have four jobs — only one of which pays — and I'm busy. This column isn't late because I was busy around deadline, though. For the past couple of weeks I haven't really been very busy. Nor have I been able to concentrate on much of anything — and that's why the column is late. I've been spending my time either watching CNN and getting engulfed in all of the shock and horror, or engaging in any activity I could think of to prevent myself from watching CNN and getting engulfed in all of the

pletely open forum in its own way, in the sense that it's my magazine and I can say/do anything I want in it without having to answer to anyone. (However, we don't have as many contributors as *HL* and, as such, not as wide of a range of topics or interests.) Our writers often make statements that I disagree with, but I don't censor them. Actually, our good friend the Cosmic Commander of Wrestling has said a couple things in *C14* that could damn near have led to litigation being brought against us, but I printed his semi-slanderous remarks anyway, and fortunately none of the people he's slagged have come after us. (Maybe they realize it's just a record review and is therefore solely for the purpose of entertainment. Or maybe they just can't read.) But I've recently learned that not censoring the writers doesn't actually stop censorship from entering my magazine. Yesterday I approached the publicist of someone I wanted to interview, and was told that I would first have to send over an e-mail detailing what topic(s) I wanted to discuss with the interview subject in order to get approval before I would be allowed to set up the interview. I was shocked. We've been doing *C14* for eight years, and that was a first. Anyone who has read one of my interviews knows, and anyone who has been interviewed by me can tell you, that although I prepare for interviews, I do not follow a set list of questions. I honestly don't think I could. My brain is active; it jumps around a lot. I mean, are you reading this column? I'm already off my topic! How the hell am I supposed to turn in a list of what I want to talk about with an interview subject a month from now? I got so flustered over it that I decided to just drop the

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leslie goldman

shock and horror. (My top three activities have been having sex with my husband, listening to music, and talking to friends/family on the phone.) I don't really want to write about the current situation, so I'm not going to. I have to admit that it was hard to come up with another topic, since everything seems trivial in comparison to such massive amounts of death and destruction. I decided to scrap a half-written column wherein I bitched about how annoying it is to see lame pop stars in New York Dolls and Clash t-shirts. (Worse yet, bought-at-the-thrift-store-for-99-cents-and-then-bedazzled-and-resold-to-empty-headed-slaves-to-fashion-for-a-few-hundred-dollars New

York Dolls and Clash t-shirts.) Fortunately, when I looked at the calendar to determine exactly how late my column was, I realized that there is one semi-relevant topic that I'd like to write about; something I think readers of this magazine should have at least a slight interest in — censorship. Specifically, I'd like to discuss Banned Book Week, since September 2001 marks its 20th year. It's always weird to write something "time sensitive" for *Hit List*, since by the time this column appears in print any dates I mention will be a couple months past, but I could talk about Banned Book Week every week. (Yeah I know, I'm a nerd; whatever.) I think it's always relevant to talk about freedom of speech, especially in a forum like this. *HL* is a bastion of free speech and, at least from my experience, a completely open forum. I think my magazine *Carbon 14* is a com-

Most librarians don't have pink hair or visible piercings or any of those other superficial markings that society considers "counter-cultural," but most of them fancy themselves to be free-thinkers.

whole thing. As far as I'm concerned, the interview has essentially been a victim of censorship. (I'm not naming the intended interviewee because I'm not entirely sure that they know their interviews are being pre-screened by a possibly well-meaning third party.)

But to get back to my other "point": Banned Books Week. I pulled the following paragraph from the ALA (American Library Association) website — www.ala.org/bbooks — to serve as a brief overview: "Observed since 1982, the annual event reminds Americans not to take this pre-

cious democratic freedom for granted. The ALA's Office for Intellectual Freedom has recorded more than 6,000 book challenges since 1990. It is estimated that less than one-quarter of all challenges are reported and recorded. A "challenge" is defined as a formal, written complaint filed with a library or school about a book's content or appropriateness. The majority of challenges (roughly 60 percent) are brought by parents, followed by library patrons and administrators."

I love to read. I have always loved to read, so access to books is an important thing in my little world. I remember going to the library once a week, every week, with my mom when I was a kid (she's a teacher, and as we all know, schools don't actually provide teachers with all of the resources they need to teach — another topic for another time); the library lady always tried to stop me

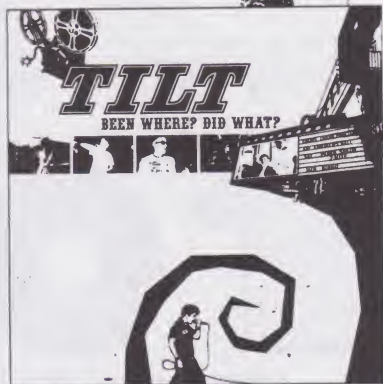
from looking at books in the adult section. (Perhaps my first encounter with censorship?) But my mom always checked out whatever I wanted for me. Later on in life I became a library lady, although I worked in a specialized library that catered to doctors and medical students, not a public library. Some of the doctors jokingly referred to me as the "library babe" because, by their standards, I didn't "look like a librarian." Maybe I don't, but despite how square my librarian sisters and brothers can be (and I think Professor Bale can back me up on this — some librarians are unbelievably square), they're radical in their own way. Most librarians don't have pink hair or visible piercings or any of those other superficial markings that society considers "countercultural," but most of them fancy themselves to be free-thinkers — even if only in theory and not in their personal practices — and proclaim to be against censorship. I worked with one young woman at the library who was decidedly uptight from a sexual standpoint — and indeed was proud of it — yet despite the fact that the contents of books like *The Story Of O* or *Venus In Furs* or even some of the books in our library like *Psychopathia Sexualis* would be completely offensive and repulsive to her, and possibly scare her hair into a permanent bun, she staunchly believed in other peoples' right to read those books and have access to those books should they want to or need to. (It's probably the only thing we had in common aside from the very basics, like the fact that we were both female.)

But not just "dirty books" get challenged. Many books you probably had to read in high school and college, the supposed classics by academic standards, have been challenged. The list is

LESLIE GOLDMAN

way too vast to print here, but everything from the Bible to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to seemingly innocent children's books like *Harry Potter* has come under fire throughout the years. According to the ALA, the other "Most Challenged" titles include *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, for its use of language, particularly references to race; *It's Perfectly Normal*, a sex education book by Robie Harris, for being too explicit, especially for children; and *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou, for the description of rape she suffered as a child." I suspect that a lot of you could give a fuck about Shakespeare or Mark Twain or Maya Angelou, but the circumstances that brought about such a thing as Banned Books Week are, at their core, about much more than individual books or authors — they're about our fundamental rights to freedom of speech and freedom of expression — and that's why I bring it up here. If you're reading this magazine, you should already be concerned with those fundamental rights — actually, *everybody* should be, but I'm enough of a realist to acknowledge that a portion of society is beyond apathetic — because banning books leads to banning magazines, especially ones like *HL* and other publications that contain "questionable content." If that happens, all that we'll be left with is *TV Guide* and Martha Stewart's *Living* — and we sure as fuck don't want that, do we? ☺

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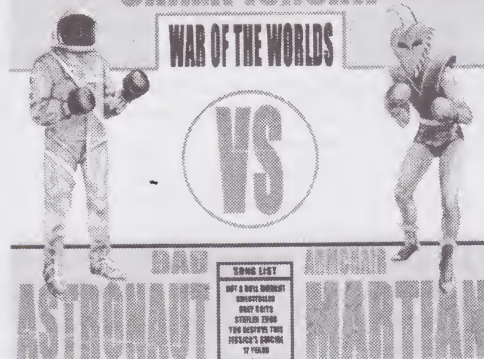


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She tossed her pretty blond head and her hair was momentarily suspended in the gentle breeze that crept across Central Park on a glorious October day. New York had never looked so beautiful, and neither had she. A hundred blocks south, workers were digging their way through the still-smoking towers of rubble, and a dust cloud reeking with the stench of death snaked its way through the concrete canyons of Wall Street. But here, in the midst of the greatest park in the greatest city in the history of the world, it was all a faraway nightmare. We saw nothing but greenery and strolling couples, heard nothing but bird songs and murmured conversations, felt nothing but a deep contentment at the beauty that surrounded us and a bittersweet melancholy at the passing of summer into autumn and winter. Such moments of peace and forgetfulness were rare, however, in the weeks following September 11. New Yorkers snatched them when they found them, eagerly and hungrily, but they couldn't last. They were as fleeting, as evanescent as the days of Indian summer, and inevitably thoughts and words would turn back to the subject that enveloped us all.

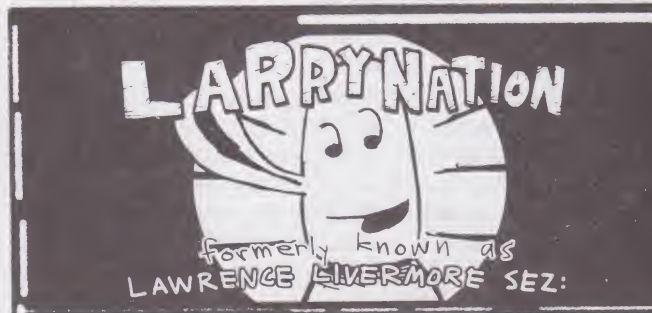
With the certitude of youth and a quiet vehemence that took my breath away, she said, "I don't give a damn about those people that died in the World Trade Center." During the day-long argument that followed, she amended that statement to mean that she didn't feel any more or less compassion for those victims than she did for the "millions" of people around the world who in her view had died as a result of American misdeeds.

It was an argument I was to hear often, in person and in the media; she had simply taken it to its logical extreme. Most Chomsky-ites and "anti-capitalists" and "new new leftists" had been circumspect enough to preface their America-bashing with a perfunctory, "Of course it's terrible what happened to those people in the World Trade Center, but..." before tearing into their laundry lists of every crime that could conceivably be laid at the doorstep of Western civilization since the dawn of time. All she had done was cut out the middle man. Americans are bad, ergo they — she and I included — deserved to die. In the most horrible way, if possible. The prominent race-baiter Ward Churchill has written a book called *Pacifism as Pathology*, in which he deplores the hesitancy of the left to use violence in pursuit of its revolutionary goals. She'd taken it one step further: to redress our collective guilt, we should all commit revolutionary suicide.

The ideas she expressed were unsettling enough; what made them profoundly disturbing was that she is someone who I've long admired for both her intelligence and her compassion, two qualities that seemed to have abruptly deserted her. Unlike the kneejerk activists who piled into the parks for "Stop The War"

rallies before there was even a war to stop, she is well informed about global politics. Unlike the 60's relics and retreads who've been searching vainly for a new *raison d'être* ever since the end of the Vietnam War, she's young, thoroughly modern — if not postmodern — and well on track toward becoming a part of America's academic and cultural elite.

This is what truly depressed me. Not that her views seemed so far beyond the pale, but that within the academic world she inhabits they are so completely normal. Within a few years she'll almost certainly be teaching and



publishing at one of America's leading universities, and unless time and experience cause her to rethink her present views, she'll be passing them on to a new generation of impressionable teenagers.

In the aftermath of September 11, there were only two sets of voices urging us to understand why the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were essentially our own fault. One set, obviously, was that of the Islamist fanatics who see Western civilization itself as the enemy. The other consists of our own homegrown left-wing fundamentalists who see, well, Western civilization itself as the enemy.

The extremists of the far left did find one unlikely ally here in America. For once the lunatic Christian fundamentalists Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were in full agreement with the lunatic secular fundamentalists like Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky: it was all America's fault. Approximately 95% of Americans

saw things rather differently, but sectarian fanatics are never troubled by opinion polls. Whether they're trying to impose a theocracy or a "people's revolution," one principle and only one obtains, and that is that might makes right. In that sense, there is little difference between the black-clad Taliban and the black-clad anarchists who proclaim their right to take over cities, destroy property and attack people in pursuit of a quixotic "anti-capitalist" crusade that almost no one supports. It's probably

***For once the lunatic
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Noam Chomsky.***

HIT SQUAD

only a lack of courage and imagination that has thus far prevented some of the "black bloc" from launching acts of sabotage and terror similar to those of the Islamist fanatics, and it's probably only a matter of time before they do just that.

Some writers have said that if there's any possible silver lining to the tragedy of September 11, it's that the lunatic left (and its bedfellows on the lunatic right) have finally been revealed as ideologically and morally bankrupt. While most Americans, regardless of political affiliation or ethnic background, found common cause in their grief and horror, while cops and firemen and everyday working class people risked and in many case sacrificed their lives to deal with the emergency, the left fulminated on the sidelines, issued pious pronouncements, and tried desperately not to sound too gleeful.

Even those honorable leftists who were genuinely horrified by the carnage were revealed as wholly inadequate to the occasion. Those who would wage revolution presuppose their own ability to replace the existing system with one which would work better, but of all the voices raised on the left, not a single one offered a plausible answer to how a government of their devising would fulfil the pre-eminent duty of any government: to provide for the safety and security of its own citizens.

We were told by Chomsky that we must "try to understand" the motives of the terrorists. Klein offered us a syntactically-tortured mishmash of "signs" and "signifiers" and "dominant metaphors." Much of the activist left united behind a three point

program: stop the war, defend civil liberties, stop ethnic scapegoating and racism. As one commentator sardonically noted, "Any chance we could come out against terrorism as well?" The left would appear to have well and truly lost the plot. No reasonable person could deny that war, ethnic scapegoating, and racism are Bad Things or that civil liberties are a Good Thing, but as the Dead Kennedys presciently proclaimed, we've got a bigger problem now. If the left can't explain how it's going to protect us from getting bombed, gassed, or even nuked by fanatics who make Hitler's Nazis look almost reasonable by comparison, I'm not inclined to trust them with preserving the peace or my civil liberties.

But while I'm hopeful that this disaster spells the end for the self-loathing and nihilistic leftism that, in a wild misappropriation of language and logic, has dubbed itself "progressive," I'm far from confident. The suspicion of and overt hostility toward all things American has become so deeply ingrained, especially in the academic community, that it won't die easily. The pluralism and tolerance that are among America's proudest hallmarks could, carried to excess, ultimately be its undoing.

How could that be? Is there such a thing as too much freedom, too much tolerance of dissent? That's a difficult question, one that becomes especially thorny in times of national crisis. George Orwell touched on this when he excoriated British pacifists during World War II: by making what they considered a moral stand against war, he reasoned, they were effectively acting on behalf of the Nazis, just as German pacifists, if there were any, would effectively be acting on behalf of the British. But because German pacifists had no freedom to act upon their beliefs — at least not without being killed — the only active pacifists were

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British, and thus pacifism was, in a very real sense, a pro-Nazi movement. At the very least, pacifists abdicated all moral responsibility for the mayhem and genocide that would ensue if the Nazis succeeded in conquering Britain. Thus, Orwell argued, pacifism was, under the circumstances, an immoral movement.

I think the same could be said of those who attempt to rationalize terrorist attacks on the US, or protest US attempts to defend itself against such attacks. To argue that the US is not free from blame completely sidesteps the issue. No person, and certainly no nation, is free from blame. But only the most adolescent analysis neatly divides people or states into "good" and "bad" camps. Just as in every aspect of our lives, we must choose among greater goods and lesser evils. Sometimes those choices are difficult and complex, but at other times they are no-brainers. Balancing the economy against the environment, individual rights against collective security, these are things that need to be constantly argued and rethought. But whether to throw our lot in with the freest, most liberal, tolerant, racially and ethnically integrated, prosperous and opportunity-laden society in the history of the planet, or with a totalitarian band of religious fanatics who would drag the entire world back into medieval theocracy and kill anyone who questions or opposes them? Any answer longer than "Duh" is probably overly elaborate.

As I write this, near the end of the first week in October, nothing more has happened. No missile strikes, no carpet bombing, nothing but troop movements and rhetoric on the government side, defiance on the terrorists' side, and well, more defiance from the leftists and the pacifists and the anti-capitalists. It's a very hot night, almost like midsummer, and the windows are wide open. I can hear the never-ending roar of the New York streets, the sirens and honking horns, the shouts and laughter, the ebb and flow of millions of lives intertwined at the apex of the most amazing and most successful experiment in the history of human civilization.

It's almost unthinkable that all this could be lost, that this city could, like the great capitals of ancient times, be reduced to rubble and ravaged by barbarism. And yet last month's events showed us just how precarious our place in the world really is. History is littered with atrocities, and the incineration and entombing of some 6,000 souls at the World Trade Center was not, in itself, the worst of them. But the ideology that spawned it, left unchallenged, will produce a far greater atrocity: the extinguishing of modern civilization.

It is difficult enough to understand why people — hundreds of years after the Enlightenment — would sacrifice themselves for such a cause, but it makes at least some sort of sense when the threat originates in a part of the world that has yet to fully share in the benefits of modernity. What's truly mind-boggling is that within our own society we have people — among them the most privileged and pampered of our young — who would willingly apply themselves to the same aim.

I'm not a patriot or a flag-waver. I feel more loyalty to

London or New York than I do to Britain or the USA. But times like these demand that we put aside our normal interests and prejudices and find common ground with all those who share our broader values. There are innumerable things to criticize about American society, American government, American foreign policy, and the fact that one can't walk two blocks without seeing a McDonald's or a Starbucks. But now is not the time for that. Now is the time to make sure that our way of life survives, that it has the opportunity to grow and get better. When I think of all the advances that have taken place in my lifetime, the growth in freedom, in human rights, environmental awareness, and economic opportunity, I am flabbergasted at those who — living in the same society that I do — see only evil and hold that America and all its works must be destroyed.

History is littered with atrocities, and the incineration and entombing of some 6,000 souls at the World Trade Center was not, in itself, the worst of them.

The critics are right in one regard: if we do not try harder to extend the prosperity and freedom we enjoy to other parts of the world, any security gained through military means will be illusory and short-lived. But what they often forget is that the first law of existence is self-preservation, and that if we fail in that task, all other bets are off. Unless they honestly think that Islamic fundamentalism is better equipped to achieve the goals they hold dear, they have little choice but to throw their lot in with the West.

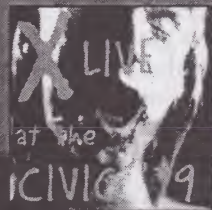
By the time you read this, many things could have happened. There may have been more attacks upon the US or on Europe. The United States may

have used military force wisely and judiciously, or recklessly and ineffectively. More innocent people may have died, perhaps a few, perhaps many. The least likely outcome is that nothing will have happened, but that too is possible.

Meanwhile, back here in New York City, it's a hot Friday night and the streets are calling. Tomorrow it's supposed to turn cold and rainy, and summer may finally have gone. I want to be out there wandering those streets, dazzled by the lights, the people, the magnificence and grandeur and folly of human endeavor, believing, against all hope, that tomorrow might never come. If or when it does, I hope and pray that we are equal to it. It's easy to be cynical, and I have spent much of my life being very cynical indeed. It is a principal affliction of my generation and those that have come after it. But I've never grown so cynical as to believe that there aren't some things worth believing in.

Here in New York I've seen the worst and the best that humankind is capable of. May we find the strength to nourish what is good, the courage to oppose what is evil, and the wisdom to know the difference. Past generations have faced similarly daunting challenges, and by not shrinking from them, bequeathed to us a world full of more possibilities and promise than they themselves could have ever imagined. Now it is our turn. ☙

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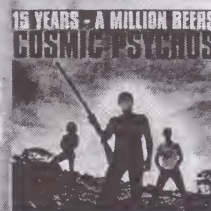


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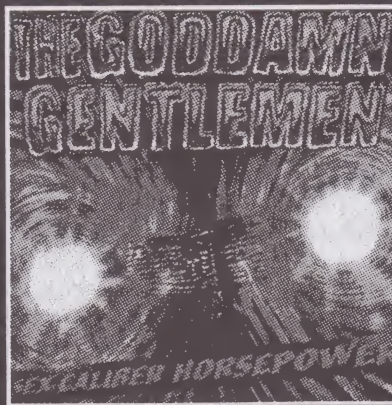
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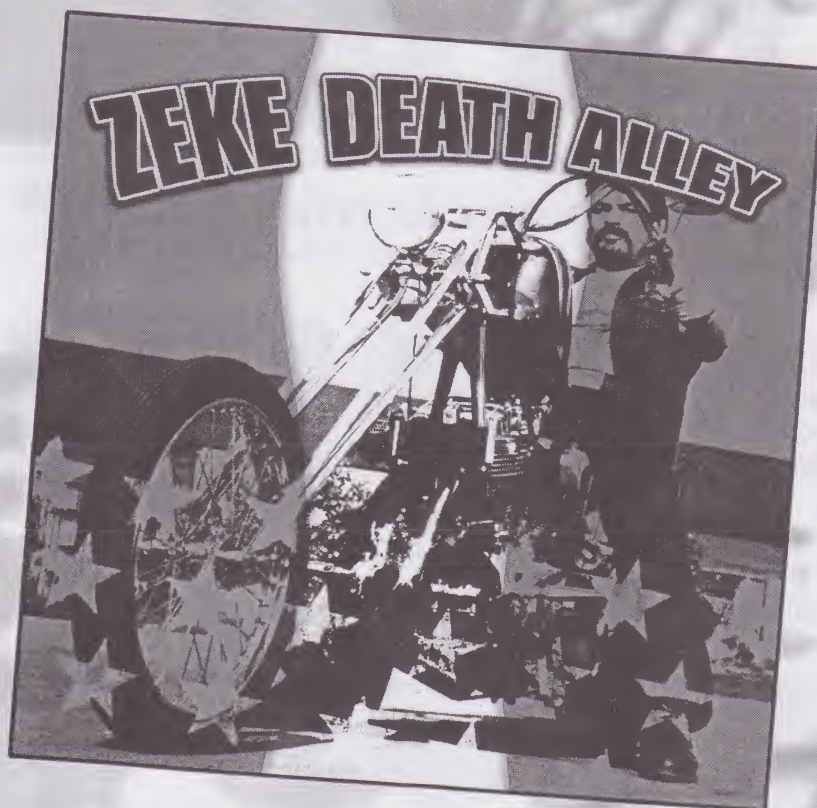
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THE GREATEST SINGLE THREATS TO ROCK'N'ROLL

To commemorate the recent induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame of such stellar "rockers" as Merv Griffin, Jim Nabors, George "Goober" Lindsey, Maya Angelou, Perry Como, Arnold Palmer, Liberace, and Zsa Zsa Gabor, I feel duty-bound to honor the spirit of the music in my own peculiar way.

Consider the following, then, to be the indictment that I would read were there ever to be — as I believe there should be — a tribunal convened for war crimes against rock'n'roll and/or musical crimes against humanity in general. The main weapons of this blitzkrieg against bop, if you will, have always been singles. And, yes, while some singles are mere hand grenades — here today, gone tomorrow — hit singles can, in the wrong hands, be weapons of mass destruction. These are the ones that crawl onto the Top 40 charts and lodge there, like butt-ugly spiders with festering sacs of poison, waiting for some unsuspecting passerby. These songs stick around for awhile, hog the airwaves, gridlock the shelves at the megamall, and brainwash the unenlightened, wreaking untold amounts of collateral damage in the war for control of rock'n'roll's very soul. Even people who hate them at first listen may find themselves humming the melodies. (I'll never forget the moment of existential dread that visited me after one of these rinky dink tunes implanted itself into my grey matter and I found myself not just humming, but actually SINGING, "Alone Again Naturally" by Gilbert O'Sullivan).

Yes, even I, like so many others who once possessed fragile eggshell minds, was a captive audience for this pabulum during my childhood. Still susceptible to it during my tormented adolescence and despair-laden college years, I confess to having stood still long enough to be tainted once or twice more. Since I can never get those ruined hours back, and the government will never pay me the reparations to which I am fully entitled, I am left with no choice but to take my case to a higher authority. It is time for these people to answer for their heinous acts before God, Allah, Jehovah, Zeus, Ra, Billy Graham, and Pat, Oscar, and Robbie Robertson.

My list, "The Greatest Single Threats to Rock'n'roll," is intended to show that, like any conduit of free expression, rock'n'roll facest its gravest dangers from within its own ranks. Indeed, the biggest threat has always been from those nefarious recording artists who sport the requisite facial hair and sartorial trends of their blissfully brief moments in the sun to peddle some horrific poo poo in the name of pop. Because they have been allowed to get away with this for going on three generations now, the bar has been incrementally lowered with each new crime —

and each new gaggle of teen rebels. This, dear rockers, compromises our very gene pool and thus helps to explain why rock'n'roll, punk, pop, rockabilly, and even heavy metal have been marginalized from the Top 40 charts today. Have you taken a look at the charts lately? Who are these people?

Let's cut to the chase. Countless singles could easily qualify for "Worst" status, but in order to qualify for my list, a song must have made an appearance somewhere near the top of the charts. It must also have tried to foist itself off on a rock'n'roll audience, if not (like a sheep in



wolf's clothing) evoking the sacred name of our music in its title (e.g., "I Dig Rock and Roll Music" by Peter, Paul and Mary; "It's Still Rock and Roll To Me" by Billy Joel; or "The Heart of Rock & Roll" by Huey Lewis and the News,)

Armed with little more than Joel Whitburn's *Billboard*

Book of Top 40 Hits and a bunker's worth of righteous indignation, I have drawn up my list of prime suspects. Many egregious violators — too many to count, in fact — were not even considered for this list, because any sane rock'n'roll fan was at least hip enough to figure out what lame, unrocking pieces of shite these singles were at the time of their Top 40-hood (e.g., any disco abomination; any fluke hit by a member of the Rat Pack; elevator music by the likes of George Benson; "jazz rock" by the likes of Herbie Hancock; and

Paul Anka, Madonna, Sgt. Barry Sadler, Victor Lundberg, etc.). Notice that I am not even mentioning rap music or Mariah Carey.

The list has been presented in alphabetical order by artists' name. This is not due to any sophisticated filing system on my part — it is simply the order in which I found them in Whitburn's indispensable guide. Also, the list would be prohibitively long if I cast my net back beyond, say, 1965. Not coincidentally, that's a logical cut-off point for me, personally, as that was when my rock'n'roll consciousness began to form out of the ether and miraculous mist surrounding the first two hit singles I ever purchased: "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones and "All Day And All of the Night" by the Kinks.

***Like any conduit of
free expression,
rock'n'roll facest its
gravest dangers from
within its own ranks.***

HIT SQUAD

THE GREATEST SINGLE THREATS TO ROCK'N'ROLL ARE:

Abba — “Dancing Queen”. Some people I knew actually claimed to enjoy Abba, but surely this was an ironic pose. Wasn't it?

Bryan Adams — “Heaven”. Hell is more like it.

Ambrosia — “Holdin' On To Yesterday”. The sort of turgid “FM rock” that was played endlessly, segueing from Supertramp and Alan Parsons Project. Or was it Al Stewart?

America — “Lonely People”. Any single by this band would qualify, but this one exhibited the susceptibility to treacly sentimentality that resides deep in the nation's heart.

Adam Ant — “Goody Two Shoes”. In some ways, New Wave — embodied by this 1982 single — is even less forgivable than disco.

The Archies — “Sugar, Sugar”. This might have been amusing in, say, 1985, but the year it appeared was 1969, a time of revolution. This was my first inkling that people who hated rebellion were working to subvert it; in this case, Don Kirshner, who created the studio group, and Jeff Barry, who wrote all the tunes. My guess is they were CIA...or KGB.

Argent — “Hold Your Head Up”. How could any member of the great Zombies have been a party to something this bad? They went on to record a concept album about the comet Kouhoutek, so maybe there is a karmic law, after all.

Asia — “Heat of the Moment”. It would have been great if they really had been from Asia, then we'd have never heard of them. As it was, this studio band was comprised of the dregs of Emerson Lake and Palmer, Yes, and King Crimson.

Bad Company — “Can't Get Enough”. We got enough of this group from the opening chord of their debut album. How were we to know that cross breeding great bands like Mott the Hoople and Free would produce THIS?!

Band Aid — “Do They Know It's Christmas?” An all-star wankfest led by Bob Geldof. No, they didn't know it was Christmas, but we knew it was really dreadful music.

Bay City Rollers — “Saturday Night”. Mark this date (November 1975) as the moment when the gauntlet was tossed at the feet of all the great future punk rockers in Thatcher's England.

Bee Gees — anything after 1970. Un-Bee Gee bro Andy Gibb died in 1988 of, well, bad musical karma. One of the other Bee Gees married Lulu, if I'm not mistaken. Enough said.

Blondie — “Call Me” or “Heart of Glass”. Not to flog a habitue of CBGB, but you had to figure punk's first wave was over when the cocktail dresses and skinny ties were donned.

Blood, Sweat & Tears — “Spinning Wheel”. David Clayton Thomas sang the way you'd imagine Dan “Hoss Cartwright” Blocker might sing on the Ponderosa. This album also had “And

When I Die,” but that song unfortunately did not prove prophetic.

Boston — “More Than a Feeling”. It sounded, looked, smelled and tasted like rock. But it wasn't rock. Glad I didn't step in it.

Bread — “Make It With You”. This was their first hit and only #1 single. It's included in a list of “rock singles” because I vaguely recall a guitar solo with wah wah pedal on one of their songs (“Guitar Man”?).

Brooklyn Bridge — “Worst That Could Happen”. From 1969. The title says it all.

Buggles — “Video Killed The Radio Star”. This 1979 radio hit was reprised two years later (on 8/1/81, another epitaph for rock'n'roll), as the first video shown on MTV's premiere broadcast. Compounding their crimes, the members of this duo went on to join Yes.

Captain & Tenille — “Love Will Keep Us Together”. Mayday, mayday! The first of a string of Scud missiles launched by this married duo onto the airwaves of rock radio.

Shaun Cassidy — “That's Rock 'N' Roll”. No, that was Rock 'N' Roll's wake up call, dialed in on 8/20/77. Punk rock soon washed this little boy's career away like a baby's turd on the lip of Niagara Falls.

Harry Chapin — “Cat's In The Cradle”. You couldn't savage the guy because of the car wreck; same with Jim Croce.

Chicago — “Saturday In the Park”, “If You Leave Me Now,” and...hell, you could take up a full page just listing their abominable hit singles. Peter Cetera is a menace to society.

Joe Cocker — “Up Where We Belong”. Teaming with Jennifer Warnes, the sweaty ex-pipefitter was not in Woodstock Nation anymore; he was down in Woodschlock Hell.

Phil Collins — “Against All Odds (Take a Look at Me Now)”. The first #1 hit by the Genesis drummer only encour-

aged him to pursue his solo career in 1984. Oh, woe.

Christopher Cross — “Ride Like the Wind” was his first hit. “Breaks like the Wind” was more like it. Backing vocal by the dreaded Michael “Doobie” McDonald.

Dr. Hook and the Medicine Show — “The Cover of Rolling Stone”. This 1973 novelty hit unwittingly pointed the way toward the dreadnaught of celebrity culture that helped undermine everything good, including what was once America's premier rock'n'roll bible.

The Doobie Brothers — “What A Fool Believes”. Many fools believed this was “lite rock”.

Eagles — “Best Of My Love”. This song, their first #1 hit, engendered the worst of our hate, and it also presaged the end of rock'n'roll as we knew it. There are people in this country who paid up to \$1,000 to see The Eagles play a millennium eve concert. We must find these people and stop them from breeding. Or at least deport them.

Electric Light Orchestra — “Xanadu,” with Olivia Newton-John. Could any band in which Roy Wood was once a member produce something this cruel and unusual in the way of mass punishment?

Elton John — “Don't Go Breaking My Heart”. Would we have broken his fingers.

It sounded, looked, smelled and tasted like rock. But it wasn't rock. Glad I didn't step in it.

Exile — “Kiss You All Over”. This rock band from Kentucky was fronted by a lead singer with the mane of a thoroughbred, though their music had the smell of a horse stall.

Firefall — “You Are The Woman”. Mellow country rock struck America a dastardly, deceptive blow during its Bicentennial, when its collective attention was distracted. Is there some way to bring Firefall, American Flyer, Pure Prairie League, and the Eagles up on charges of treason, or at least sedition?

Foreigner — “Cold As Ice” or “Hot Blooded”. Either way, the thermostat was busted.

Peter Frampton — “I’m In You”. What was Pete trying to say with this song? Never mind; it’s better that we don’t know.

Hall & Oates — according to Joel Whitburn, Hall & Oates in the late 1980s “passed The Everly Brothers as the #1 charting duo of the rock era..” A moment of silence, please.

Jefferson Starship — “We Built This City”. At this point, the band was called Starship and had jettisoned all members of the Jefferson Airplane save Grace Slick, who had ceased having anything interesting to say in about 1972. So it wasn’t even Jefferson anything, really, just a dirigible of clichés held aloft by flatulent FM playlists.

Billy Joel — “It’s Still Rock and Roll To Me”. Have you seen any pictures of this guy lately? Tragic, really.

Huey Lewis and the News — “The Heart of Rock & Roll”. If this was the heart of rock & roll, the patient desperately needed a transplant or bypass surgery.

Lobo — “Me and You and A Dog Named Boo”. This is an example of the sort of fare that was tolerated by “rock radio” in 1971. If only Boo have been a rabid pit bull.

Kenny Loggins — “I’m Alright”. His mama couldn’t dance, his daddy couldn’t rock and roll, and the rest of his family, had they had any self-respect, surely would have disowned him.

Loverboy — “Lovin’ Every Minute of It”. This was by a rock band from Canada, a contradiction in terms at the time (1981-1985).

M — “Pop Muzik”. The movie “M” was about a child molester. Could this be the same guy?

Wings/McCartneys — “Silly Love Songs”. After what he’s been through of late, it seems churlish to gang up on Paul, but, really, he had some terribly lame moments, didn’t he?

Men Without Hats — “The Safety Dance”. Men without talent.

Ted Nugent — “Cat Scratch Fever”. The only known cure for Ted Nugent is deafness.

Gary Numan — “Cars”. This 1980 hit offered ominous portents of industrial music and techno-rave culture.

Ohio Express — “Yummy, Yummy, Yummy”. My own mother was offended. She thought the song was about teen pregnancy, but it was a guy singing “I got love in my tummy,” which conjured up even more twisted images to me.

Peter Paul and Mary — “I Dig Rock and Roll Music”. Peter Paul & Mary. To quote Nigel Tufnel of Spinal Tap, “This is a joke,

isn’t it?”

Player — “Baby Come Back”. The bass player for this tedious LA rock band starred in a TV soap opera.

Poison — “Every Rose Has Its Thorn”. This was a #1 hit in 1988. It was a very bad year.

Queen — “We Are the Champions/We Will Rock You”. Arena stomping rock that would not have been out of place at Nuremburg. Another one bit the bag.

REO Speedwagon — “Can’t Fight This Feeling”. Right, it was called nausea.

Tommy Roe — “Dizzy”. Without “Yummy, Yummy, Yummy,” this would not have been possible, or even conceivable.

Rolling Stones — “Angie”. This must be Mick Jagger’s biggest regret in life. Either the song itself or the fact that he shagged Bowie’s wife. Isn’t that like taking candy from a baby?

Bob Seger — “Like A Rock”. We will never be allowed to have a moment’s peace because of this ad-friendly song. More proof that mainstream rock was a wasteland in the 1980s.

Soft Cell — “Tainted Love”.

The title wasn’t the only thing tainted about this single.

Rod Stewart — “Do You Think I’m Sexy?” How does one begin answering this question without lapsing into an expletive-laden diatribe and loud, seething, incoherent rage?

Sting — “If You Love Somebody, Set Them Free”. The King of Pain really gave every breath it took on this one.

Styx — “Lady.” A forerunner of histrionic arena rock that helped pave the way for Kansas, Journey, and even Michael Bolton and Celine Dion.

Tears For Fears — “Everybody Wants To Rule The World”. Precious little pop duo took their name from Arthur Janov’s book *Prisoners of Pain* — an apt description for anyone forced to listen to their music.

Three Dog Night — “Joy To The World”. The world felt no joy when this became a hit.

Toto — “Hold The Line”. To repeat myself, mainstream rock was a wasteland in the 1980s.

Whitesnake — “Here I Go Again”. Heavy metal blunder.

Yes — “Owner Of A Lonely Heart”. Art and rock do not mix.

Zager & Evans — “In The Year 2525 (Exordium & Terminus)”. This Nebraska “folk-rock” duo was guilty of thinking deep thoughts. Almost as bad as that song about signs, signs, everywhere a sign, blocking out the scenery and messing my mind...

Frank Zappa — “Valley Girl”. After, say, the Mothers’ “Lumpy Gravy,” Frank Zappa was neither funny nor listenable. †

Alan Bisbort is coauthor (with Parke Puterbaugh) of *Rhino’s Psychedelic Trip* (Backbeat/Miller Freeman).

At this point, the band was called Starship and had jettisoned all members of the Jefferson Airplane save Grace Slick, who had ceased having anything interesting to say in about 1972.



MAKE MINE

TIGGY

BY TIM STEGALL

45 MINUTES ON A SPRING DAY IN NEW YORK CITY WITH PUNK'S FATHER AND BEST PHILOSOPHER



If I even *have* to explain to one of you who Iggy Pop is, why he's important, and why you should even care about the man or his music or this interview, I should just give up. Right now. It's a sign that I should just go out to Central Park right now, dig a very deep hole, step in, lie down, and fill that hole 'til I'm breathing dirt and I no longer have to see you.

'Cos see, what that would mean is that it's over. The cultural wars are finished, and *they* won. It means that rock is as dead as all those Fatboy Slim-sucking dogs in the UK pop press continually claim, and that everything good and pure and worthwhile has been so devalued that we might as well give up. Then again, Iggy Pop has never given up, even if there were moments in his career where it sure as hell seemed like he had, and he'll even say as much in this interview. But for the most part, the guy's stuff has maintained a certain degree of quality, the-Stooges-über-alles brigade be damned. Even on the man's weakest records, there will be a speck or two of pure genius, of pure IGGY-ness, that cannot be denied. The man is well into his 50s, and he's still fighting and kicking and spitting and cursing and defying everything that's evil and foul and false and corporate about this world. He's a bare-chested, leathery-skinned Super Hero for all of us who hate shit culture

and degradation and want our art and our lives to be ALIVE and RICH and VITAL. Like fellow fifty-somethings Wayne Kramer, Tom Waits, and Neil Young, Iggy Pop is proof that you *can* rock on into maturity and still retain your dignity and rebel spirit. You don't HAVE to become an embarrassment in the way that the Stones or the Who have, or even – for that matter – the way so acts a fraction of their age have.

In short, all you clueless little fucks who require the most basic degree of enlightenment need to know that Iggy Pop IS rock 'n' roll. Everything prior – Elvis, Chuck, Bo, Little Richard, the Stones, the Who, the Kinks, the Yardbirds, the Velvet, Jimi, and the MC5 – was all just leading up to his advent. And anything of any import since – Alice, Bowie, the Dolls, the Ramones, the Pistols, the Clash, Gen X, Black Flag, Hanoi Rocks, the Manic Street Preachers, the Backyard Babies, even this magazine – would have been

impossible without him. And even if the ugly heavy metal album he just released, "Beat 'Em Up," is not the second coming of "Raw Power" his record company would love you to believe it is, it's also not all that much of an embarrassment around here. The embarrassment is you. It's you and your wallet chain and your jock mentality and your bad dress sense, as well as your sexless, soulless, loveless, grooveless, spineless, bleached-out, overly whitebread music and way of life. It's you and your Elmer's Glue spikes and your worship of mindless fourth generation UK punk bands that were 116th rate at best. Fuck you and your Hot Water Music CDs and your ignorant death culture point of view. I'll take rock 'n' roll any day. Make mine Iggy. Even when he's making ugly heavy metal records.

Iggy Pop was interviewed in May at the Virgin Records offices in Manhattan. He was sporting the beginnings of a goatee, was visibly exhausted from a day with the press, and walked with a limp. When asked about the cause of the latter, he quipped, "I've been facing you guys all day..."

Tim Stegall: You were a massive inspiration to me on whatever front

I've been operating on, be it musically or as a writer. I don't do much rock criticism these days, but...

Iggy: (chuckling) I can't blame you!

TS: You said something really interesting about that I really took to heart in an interview a few years back. You talked about how if you were a journalist, brother help us, you'd be picking people apart.

Iggy: Yeah. Damn right, damn right. I'd be really informed. And I probably wouldn't ever make much money. I wouldn't be able to do many pieces that way. I imagine a lot of (critics) just take a lot of stuff, which adds up, and then they take those free promotional albums down to Bleeker Bob's and sell 'em. Eventually, I guess the goal is really to get a job. Most of 'em want a job in the industry. They wanna manage Bruce Springsteen or work down the hall with a corporate credit card. So, it's a different ball game.

TS: Yeah, if Lester Bangs were starting out today, I don't think he'd get a job.

Iggy: Yeah, he was pretty fierce! I see your point.

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER M. OSBOURNE



"GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE RULE OF THUMB IS YOUR AMERICAN GROUPS ARE STRONG ON THE BOTTOM, WEAK ON THE TOP. YOUR EUROPEAN GROUPS ARE STRONG ON THE TOP AND WEAK ON THE BOTTOM. THERE'S NOT MUCH GOIN' ON GROOVEWISE, AND THEY TEND TO PLOD. OASIS, BLUR, NORWEGIAN DEATH METAL, AND SWEDISH NEO-PUNK ARE NOT THAT BAD."

TS: I think that one of the reasons I don't do it much anymore is because you can't really delve into an artist and what he is all about. You also can't express anything of yourself in it.

Iggy: They don't want that. Yeah.

TS: It's more like: "Give us a little bit of copy so we can have something to go with this nice big pretty picture."

Iggy: Yeah. And generally there's a theme, like this is the health issue, or the swimsuit issue, or the summer issue, or the whatever issue. Interesting, isn't it? Yeah, weell, there's a lot of money involved. That's it, right there.

TS: That seems to be happening with everything in general anyway, though.

Iggy: Yeah, it's just a different digital world, which has made the dissemination of information instant. We hear a lot about

that, unfortunately (laughs), and unfortunately much of the information is shit! So what you get is like an instant turd that covers everything. But they can rake in a lot of ducats fast. I mean, the way it used to work for a top-ranked rock band was that they'd make three or four fantastic albums, then wake up one day and realize they were broke. Then they'd sell their future to some sharp accountant, and would have to make another three or four really great albums before they made any money. So they wouldn't really get shitty 'til long about the tenth album. But now, basically, they can get the money in one or two albums and kill themselves like

fuckin' Nirvana did, or start their own corporate arm like Limp Bizkit's doing, or whatever. It's a different game. The numbers are huge and the retrieval systems are much faster.

TS: What's protecting you from this?

Iggy: I'm in a unique and funny sort of wonderful little kinda "pet-bunny-in-the-backyard" position. I haven't done so terribly that I have to starve or to take embarrassing work or get ill. And I haven't done well enough to totally turd out yet. So I'm in a kind of a middle zone. I've got enough money to say "fuck you," and that's nice, but not enough that I don't have to work. Because like everybody else, I have divorces and my old managers to pay off, and my fuckin' car needs an oil change. I have shit like everybody else has. So it keeps me in a kind of middle zone, and I suppose I've exhibited a little combination of street smarts, native paranoia, and a lot of stick-to-it-tivity and just plain hard work, a lotta hard work and discipline. I manage to maintain – at least, what I think I kind of maintain – is some sort of quality, to the point where if I listen to the stuff I just recently made I think, "Oh, that doesn't suck." I don't feel that it sucks, anyway. (giggles) Whereas usually by the time you get to this stage, you've already given up, and it all sounds more like "Get a stretcher for that guy!" Some of my stuff, over the course of time, has started to veer towards that, at times. It's gonna. If you do something hundreds of times over and over, it's not gonna all be fucking cherries. But it's stayin' pretty up there, for now, anyway.

TS: I love the rawness of this new album.

Iggy: This one's raw, yeah!

TS: You produced it yourself?

Iggy: Yes, I did. There was talk about doin' it with one of those hot new young demographic producers, and the guy was gonna fuck with me, and I just wasn't goin' for it. Then there was a period where I thought, "Well, maybe I should get some old school commercial heavy rock producer who knows what he's doin'." And both guys sorta said, "You know, you're really cool. We'd like to get together and do lunch with you, but we don't really want to get too involved." And that was OK, I understood, and it was kind of a gift. But you learn something anytime you meet

anybody, and eventually I decided, "I think I should do this." So I did it myself and got away with it. And the A&R guy here, bless his little head, gave me the go ahead. 'Cos it is their corporation. I didn't wanna pay for it. So, he let me do it. It's my little band, little fireplug from Canada, fuckin' incendiary rockfan guitarist, Whitey (Kirst), who's been playin'.... Basically, the justice of the situation is, he's been playing fuckin' "Raw Power" for me on and off for eleven years. It's about time he had a chance to play his own music, y'know? So, I said, "You do it." From that casual beginning, I exerted a lot of pressure on him. I'd push his ass very, very severely for a year to come up with the best stuff I could with him, and his brother came in on the drums when I had an opening a couple years ago. I found (bassist) Moose Man from an old Body Count record and dug him up. It was suggested to me....I worked actually with Death in Vegas recently, and that was great. But I just didn't see myself going out with a band of 20 year-olds with rings in their noses just because I could, if y'know what I'm sayin'. Y'know, with the facial hair done a certain way, and maybe it would be called "Iggied" or something instead of "Disturbed" or "Stained" or "Iggabus" or something...

TS: Some one syllable word!

Iggy: Right right right, yeah! "Spud" or something.

TS: It's a mark of bad quality, folks!

Iggy: The band members are guys that are in their thirties and I'm in my fifties. That seemed about right. And that's about it. Other than that, it's '70s-inspired, I think: handmade, kinda somewhere between Hard Rock and Proto-Metal, the music that later became codified as Metal, but before it was called that.

TS: I was gonna say, it sounds like your Heavy Metal record.

Iggy: Yeah, Heavy Hard, or Heavy Metal, but there's more to it. There's a little more songiness and structure than I associate with a lot of Heavy Metal. That's the format, and then within that we fuck around with it. It gets an urban twist from the basically South Central ghetto bass player, and then it gets a little bit of an academic twist from me, 'cos that's what I do, word-wise.

TS: Well, one thing about a lot of people who have since tried to do what you do or what any of the Detroit bands did, I think they missed the fact that you guys had a tremendous sense of groove.

Iggy: (quietly, almost in relief) Yes. Yes. Yes.

TS: You not only grew up in the shadow of Motown, but also listening to jazz. And I don't hear that swing in a lot of today's bands – like the Hellacopters, say.

Iggy: No, no. I don't either, and the ones who most diligently try to go after that are the American Neo-Metal and Rap crossover groups, and they mostly do it using loops and drum machines. Generally speaking, the rule of thumb is your American groups are strong on the bottom, weak on the top. Your European groups are strong on the top and weak on the bottom. There's not much goin' on groove-wise, and they tend to plod. Oasis, Blur, Norwegian Death Metal, and Swedish Neo-Punk are not that bad. But even the Ramones did not always thrill me on the bottom. There wasn't that much grooving to it.

TS: Oh they were very "white."

Iggy: Yeah, it was totally, y'know...

TS: Great as they were, they were very "white."

Iggy: There wasn't a lot of invention about them. But, yeah, groove is important to me, anyway.

TS: You gotta be able to dance!

Iggy: I think so. Do somethin'! Move to it, somehow.

TS: I mean, that's what's always been inspirational to me about the stuff that your school of bands did: the music hit you at the gut and it hit you pelvis besides hitting you at the head.

Iggy: That was the idea: It was supposed to fulfill those things to be any good. Basically, you listen to your heroes and you go, "Shit, I wanna be in it, doin' some-thin' like that!" That's part of the job.

TS: And your heroes were black, for the most part?

Iggy: A lot of 'em were, although there was also a lot of great stuff to be found in country and rockabilly music: A lot of good turns of phrase, good three-minute song construction, especially in the older country and rockabilly bands. That music's so shit-simple that it almost doesn't sound good once the drummer gets a bass drum. It's already too much. But if you just hear an old Eddie Cochran record, like, where the guy's beating on a cardboard box, and Eddie's playing guitar really great, that's good too! That white shit has something real nice. It has a nice twangy sound and sense of melody, and that's nice.

TS: A guy from my home state comes to mind here: Buddy Holly.

Iggy: Yeah, I still pull out "20 Golden Greats." I listen to that real close.

TS: He'd take the simplest number of parts and do incredible things with them.

Iggy: Yes, that's real important. But the black people have a bit of an edge. Some white, some white too.

TS: That was what made Rock 'n' Roll in the first place: Some crazy fucker from the hills of Tennessee coming into the city and discovering Rhythm and Blues and amphetamines in Sam Phillips' echo chamber. (Iggy laughs) But, um, getting back to your record, I was listening to it and I was thinking, "Y'know, Iggy must've been cackling when he handed this one in." I got to feeling you were like thinking almost: "OK, sell THIS!"

Iggy: The second half of it. The first half, they gave me...the way it works is, they have to give you enough money to fly everybody where they're going and pay the studio costs, and they wanna hear shit. They wanna hear what you're gonna do in advance. So, I let 'em hear the stuff on the first half, which is a little more formal. There are a couple of medium tempo songs, and they hadn't heard "Mask." They heard cuts two through eight, something like that. They gave me the green light, and then I did stuff like "Blood" or fuckin' "V.I.P." or "Ugliness" or all that shit. Nobody'd heard that shit, and when we got checked halfway through they said:

"OK, go ahead and finish it." The A&R guy's a sharp guy, actually. (laughing) Then I handed the record in, while unplugging my phone and leaving the country! I didn't know what they'd say, but the guy is cool, he didn't bat an eye. He just sorta said: "Well, the record certainly takes a dark turn, doesn't it? But that's cool!" They're alright with it. It's a funny thing. That whole sales thing, is it glorious to sell, or not to sell? I dunno. I'd be happy if it sold, I'd be OK. But if it doesn't sell, that's OK too. But, uh, better if it sells more. Yeah, if it sells even one more, that's better! It's OK!

TS: Y'know, "Lust for Life" will certainly take care of you if it doesn't.

Iggy: Yeah, I'm alright.

TS: I'm not gonna bash you on that. I think it's fucking great that people approach you to use your old catalogue to do that stuff. I've defended you a lot to my friends: "What the fuck is Iggy doing?" It's like, "Dude, do you know how many records he sold the first time around with that?"

Iggy: Yeah, yeah.

TS: Y'know, it's like: Let him make a little belated change.

Iggy: Well, the songs are out there, and the only way you're gonna hear my stuff so far has been that way or on non-commercial radio. And I've been happy with it, it sounds really fucking great.

TS: Well, the funniest thing for me was that whenever "Search and Destroy" was used in a Nike Commerical. I was sitting here thinking, "There's a million jerkoffs in L.A. playing sessions who would kill to be on a commercial, and who gets to play guitar on the Nike Commercial? James Williamson!"

Iggy: They almost redid the guitar on that, but I told them they couldn't. Then they gave up and used the real thing.

TS: I'm gonna ask you a few historical questions 'cos I haven't gotten to interview you in a little while. The last record you did, I felt it was really cool that you were doing a sort of "late night record." Y'know, something

that you would put on at midnight.

Iggy: That's what it is. At that time, my entire life was full of late night records (laughs), and that's what it reflected. That's how I was livin', and that's how I felt. And I also think there's nothing more fuckin' lame than some fuckin' singer or band who puts out the same loud rock record over and over. Sammy Hagar I ain't! And I think a lot of people unnecessarily fall into that. I wanted to make that record, so I made it. Most American people are generous about it and they just say, "Hey! Damn, Iggy! When did you last make a record? Was that like "American Caesar" or sumpthin'?" And they just don't even notice, which is great. The people that aren't gonna appreciate it just sort of ignored it. And there are others who obviously appreciate the record, and I think the record is a quality record, so I'm glad I made it.

TS: A funny quality of that record was that you were doing a sort of Frank Sinatra late 50's record, and then the lyrics offered things like, "Well, I wanna fuck my Nazi girlfriend."

Iggy: Yeah, exactly. Right.

TS: I heard that and then I started laughing and thinking, "Normally, he would have James Williamson wailing away underneath these words."

Iggy: Normally, I think it's not good to pull punches too much. I don't think so. It doesn't get you anywhere. So I took a bit of flack for that particular one. It was like, "What's up with THAT!?" But that's OK.

TS: Have you thought about ever doing an album of standards? Of having a piano player backing you and doing Cole Porter and stuff?

Iggy: I came close. I did a tour for "Avenue B" doin' just a couple of the slow ones and mostly rock 'n' roll songs from all different albums. But then at the end of the tour I was in France and I did a national network TV special with Medeski, Martin & Wood, which helped with the album, and a string quartet. We did all slow stuff from the album plus about five Sinatra songs. And it went well. I had Chrissie Hynde as a guest for a couple of duets on that. Some Nina Simone, and some Sinatra, I don't know if we did any Cole Porter or not, I can't remember, but that kind of thing. It was set in a

cabaret with an audience with drinks and cafe chairs and little tables. And I loved doin' it. I'm not in a giant hurry to do it again, but someday maybe I will. But right now, I'm doin' this.

TS: Well, you've certainly got the vocal chops and you've got the soul to do something like that.

Iggy: It's an attractive place to go. But this time they wanted one quick over here, so I didn't have any time to do an album of standards.

TS: Maybe later?

Iggy: Maybe later.

TS: I was dismayed to hear a few years ago that you were on a big package tour, did the classic Iggy move and hurled yourself off the stage, and the idiot kids did not catch you.

Iggy: (laughing hard) Y'know, it was kind of my own fault, because it was the wrong tour for me to be on. I took it because it was the only way I was gonna get to Omaha. And I wanted to play fuckin' Omaha! And they were goin' to Omaha, Des Moines, fucking Weirdness, Oklahoma, and all these places that I really wanted to play which were tough for me to get to. Downtown Pittsburgh, and that attracted me. I didn't care much for the other bands on the tour, and that put me in a crummy mood just to begin with. In some of the places, people were great and we connected. But in other places, I'd just go out and there would be - as it was that night in Columbus - little kids going, "Mommy, who is this crazy man? He's scaring me! We came here to see Sponge sing their new hit!" Or to see...oh, what's the name of that band? They sang "Let's Do It Like The Discovery Channel." You know that band? "You and me baby, and I'll come up..."

TS: Was it Weezer or somebody like that?

Iggy: No, worse than Weezer. Worse. [Gee, didn't think that was possible! - Tim] Some band like that basically. So they're lookin' up at me in horror, and there weren't enough of them packed in, which meant that they still had room to run away! (chuckles) I was up on a twelve

foot stage with concrete below, and it was the first song, and I was just like, "Fuck this! I'm gonna jump these little assholes!" And I felt like it was a surprise attack, and they parted and I got my shoulder dislocated. So I had it coming. It was funny. It was kinda like "Realistic Moments in Pro Wrestling!" It was really like that, like I was the bad guy in WWF, except that I was doing it in a way that was *too* real, y'know? "I'll get you, you little farts! You're gonna listen to my shit, and you're gonna like it, goddamnit!" It was pretty scary at the time, though, because I was paralyzed in that joint. The arm hung there for a couple of months.

These summer shows were in these places called sheds, which are generally in the middle of Bumfuck, and they try to draw from several quasi-metropolitan areas. Out there in the cottonwood trees somewhere, they make money in the parking lot. It's one of those type of deals. So every night, it's like playing at Disneyland. No different. Everything's paved over and organized and sterile. People are seated according to the price of their ticket. If they paid for a cheap ticket, some nights we'd have 10,000 people in the back half of the fuckin' space and nobody up front 'cos they didn't wanna pay. It was really weird. There wasn't a hospital that would take me within fuckin' less than an hour-and-a-half drive. So the arm was out, they couldn't pop it back in; I looked like a spreading oak tree for two hours! It was just like, "Teacher! I know!" And it hurt like a motherfucker. Then, by the time we got it back in, the nerve was gone. They said it was 50-50 'cos of my age, but it came back!

TS: You're O.K. now?

Iggy: Yeah, fine, sure! It took about two months. It was freaky. It was really freaky. I

spent a lot of time in the water at Miami Beach paddling around, like all those brine shrimp that you get in the back of magazines? "Hey kids! Raise a Sea Monkey!" A sea monkey shrimp, I was, for a coupla months. That will heal anything, and it came back. (waves arm proudly).

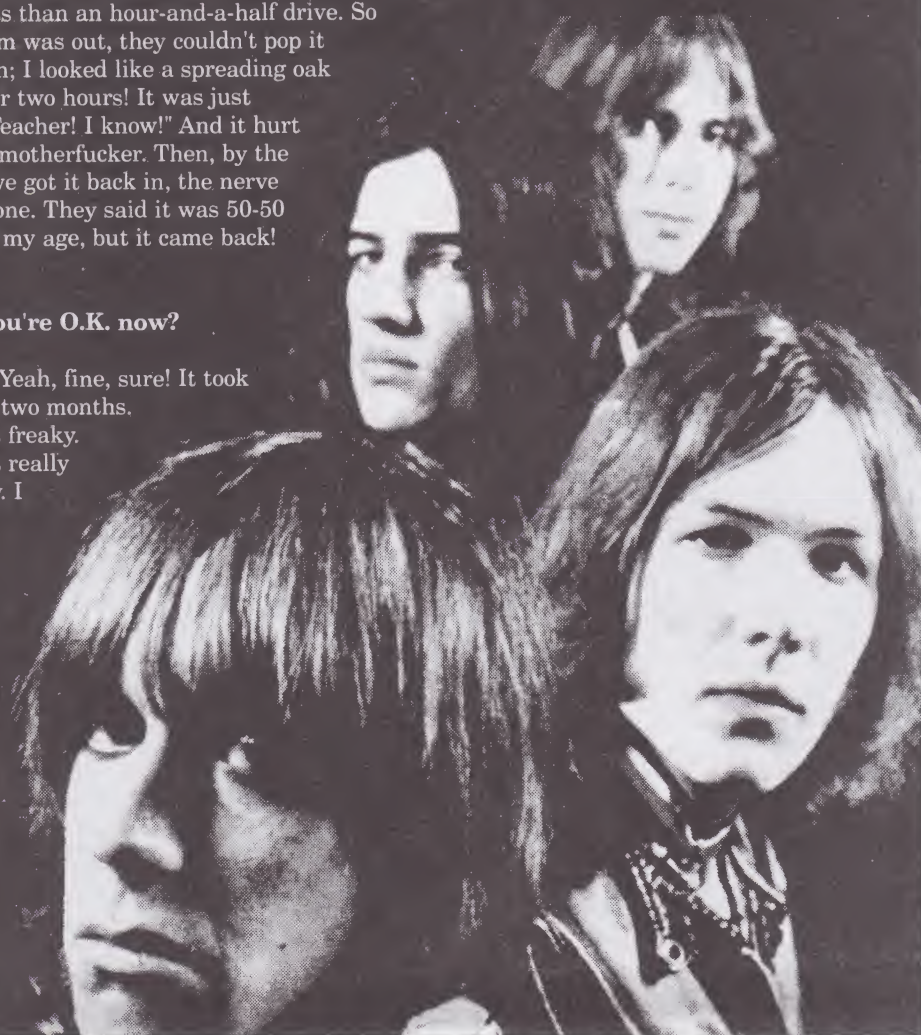
TS: You're still living down in Miami, then?

Iggy: Yeah, I like it. Like it a lot. It's interesting food, a nice mix of every sort of person, and it's a quick flight to New York but far enough away from here to get a bit of distance.

TS: I know you've needed some distance.

Iggy: Yeah. I think everybody does from time to time.

TS: How is your frame of mind these days as compared to when you were making "Avenue B"?



Iggy: Well, I'm happier now. But how's your frame of mind on a daily basis? I mean, did you sleep four hours out of twenty hours? How many hours are you wildly happy? I mean, maybe what, an hour? So for me, I'm pretty good. I mean, I'm definitely better than I was! But...

TS: I know you were saying at the time that things were a bit out of your control at that point.

Iggy: Yeah, yeah. No, this is a good time.

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER M. OSBOURNE

It really is a good time. It's a funny time right now, 'cos I'm doing press. Y'know, I've made a record and I've been out touring and stuff, but it hasn't come out yet and I haven't seen the cover and held it in my hands and all that. But...

TS: Did you record the album in Miami?

Iggy: Yes. There's this studio called Criteria that I did it at.

TS: Arif Mardin's place?

Iggy: I don't really know whose place it was, but a lotta great records came out of this one room where we did this one record with an old Neve board. It's since been bought by Hit Factory, which is big New York money, and is now called Factory/Criteria. I had a ball. I loved working there. While we were there, everybody from R.E.M. to Death Metal band Six Feet Under to Shakira to Julio Iglesias were all in there. Chuck Mangione was even there. The gamut. Inner Circle. Every sort: Jah Rule, Bone Thugs N Harmony. Just a real wide range of people. I would recommend that room to anybody.

I took the room over the garage in the house I live in to work out the record before we went in. I don't own a little house, I don't own a big house. I own a medium-sized, very nice house in a nice neighborhood with a lot of trees and privacy. And I've got an old car, an old '68 Caddy with the top down and a good sound system. I've got all my amps and shit in a room over the garage. I make the music there. We worked on writing it for a good 6-8 months, with the guitarist goin' through hundreds of songs, some on tape, some live together, rehearsed with the band for about five or six weeks, recorded for about six weeks, mixed for about three weeks, end of story.

TS: My favorite tracks on there would probably be the opening track, "Mask," and then the hidden track at the end.

Iggy: The hidden track's rockin'. Yeah. That's one of those funny things that happen when you get all wound up tryin' to make one of these records sound as good as you can and then, at the last minute, there was this one track that I couldn't do anything with. Because every time I tried to fix a guitar part or redo a vocal or add a harmony or do an edit, nothing fucking worked. We'd gotten the whole record done and I'd gotten away from it for a few weeks, and then I came back and played it and liked it. "Let me hear that fuckin' 'Sterility!'" And I heard it with all its warts, and I kept thinking, "That's the best thing on the whole fucking record!" It only took me five minutes to play, but it had taken quite awhile to write. So I thought, "You know what?" – 'cos the vocal's all distorted and shit – "Let's just put it out like it is." I thought it would be interesting and valid for the kind of people



who might like a record like this enough to listen to the other fifteen things to hear one that was pretty obviously totally unfucked with. The other tracks are basically unfucked with, but this one is totally. It has not been mixed. There's no mix, no mastering. It is just the way it came to tape, unless there was a mix applied as we went to tape. That's it. Other than that, faders haven't been touched. Nothing was touched, nothing was manipulated, no bass was added, no filter, no nothing!

"Mask" is also completely live. But with "Mask," there were four different versions we did with bass sounds and vocal treatments, all the things you do. But it's also completely live. Most of 'em are half live or two-thirds live.

TS: Half of what attracts me on those two tracks is musical. But what really grabs me are the themes that you're dealing with in both those songs.

Iggy: Well, the idea was to bring some-

negatives and trying to make something positive out of them.

Iggy: Well, yeah. That's what you do. The best stuff comes from that, always. And in the music, too. Those are your treasures. And then when anybody does something to piss you off or when you're upset about something or when a situation is very, very bad or difficult and doesn't leave you much room to maneuver, then I think that's your chance to create something. That's the way it is for me, anyway.

TS: It's the old school blues ethic.

Iggy: Yeah, right. It's always your best shot. Usually, I'd dread to be forced to sit down in a sort of wonderful, clean, comfortable environment and told "DO SOMETHING!" I wouldn't know what to do, really. What the fuck would I do? I dunno, I guess I'd write "Shiny Happy People" or something. And I guess I'd make a lot more money than I make now, but that's

TS: It was a strange thing to say at the time (1980), all things considered.

Iggy: Oh, it freaked everybody out. It really got me a lot of bad "Brownie points" at the time. It was really not what people wanted to hear from me at the time. They just weren't ready to accept that from me. "Don't tell us you're a fucking conservative! What does THAT mean?"

I like to sing about my own corruption. Everybody has some, and mine makes a great topic for me, and I just love getting into that and rooting around in it. The song was about my own corruption and my own objectification. Because especially in rock 'n' roll, what is really typical is that people objectify you. (Iggy switches into a suave guy voice.) You get The Rock Star, and he gets coupled with The Model, and they make Rock Kids who then become designers of Rock fucking Wear or something. And then once you have made your Rock Money, then you no longer need to Rock and you go on to Social Causes. This

"BASICALLY, MODERN CULTURE IS JUST TOTALLY FAKE RIGHT NOW; IT'S ALL JUST SHIT AND IT'S NO FUCKIN' GOOD. BUT I DON'T WANT TO GET ON A FUCKING SOAPBOX AND MAKE A BIG RANT ABOUT IT, EITHER. I'D RATHER JUST PUT IT IN A SONG AND HAVE FUN SINGING ABOUT IT, WITH A LAUGH AND HAVING A GOOD TIME, RATHER THAN GETTING ALL FED UP ABOUT IT."

thing to it from the heart, otherwise you've got nothing. That's the way I feel. Basically, modern culture is just totally fake right now; it's all just shit and it's no fuckin' good. But I don't want to get on a fucking soapbox and make a big rant about it, either. I'd rather just put it in a song and have fun singing about it, with a laugh and having a good time, rather than getting all fed up about it. What's the percentage in that? So that you're not wringing your hands. We're just saying, "Hey, that is all shit! But *this* rocks! So fuck you!" Which is kind of fun. "Sterility" has got a real negative message, but the music is fun.

TS: It seems like a lot of the music that I've held dear – be it made by you or anything Mr. Thunders was involved with or the Sex Pistols – the music always seemed to be taking

OK. REM are still trying to live that song down. They still don't wanna talk about it: "Shiny happy people holding hands..." I tried to write a song like that actually...once. I had one called "I'm A Happy Man." That's one of my worst songs ever. It's totally unbelievable. It's like, "That guy's not happy! Listen to him! He sounds crazy!" But I gave it a shot.

TS: You've made a few attempts at it. "I'm A Conservative" might be halfway there.

Iggy: There's a lot in that song. People are always saying, "You are NOT a conservative! What does this mean?" My drummer at the time was German, and he'd ask in his guttural accent, "Vot does this mean?" Well, listen to the words! That song's got a lot to it.

is all in capital letters. The lower case version of that is you have your drug addict, your jailbait, your nasty groupie, etc. etc. It's all these very objectified, clarified types that together make up our little scene, and so I thought it was interesting to sing about that. 'Cos I was starting to question was I was living about and singing about. And I thought, "Well really, I am getting to be a lot like an old Nazi, like a prematurely old Nazi." 'Cos I was in my early thirties at the time. So that was some of what I was trying to sing about, but it went right by people. (laughs) I knew it would! It's not necessarily their fault. I've never tried to write my songs to gain sympathy for myself. So you're never really gonna hear me sing – let's pick on Michael Stipe again, I love to pick on Michael Stipe (laughs) – "Everybody hurrrts! Soometiimees."

TS: He leaves himself wide open for that, as do Morrissey and a few other people we could name. Maybe I'm completely off on this, but what you're talking about sounds vaguely related to something I was thinking about on the way over here. I was thinking, "My God, James Newell Osterberg must hate having to sit in this conference room and have these guys come in with their idea of Iggy Pop."

Iggy: Mm.

TS: And they're interviewing James Osterberg from whatever their perspective of Iggy Pop is: The guy dragging himself through glass and basically bleeding for rock 'n' roll. The guy who shagged every single species on the planet, be it male, female, or farm machinery. The guy who has taken every single drug, etc.

Iggy: I don't mind that much because I'm doing less of it. And so it's a kind of a nice feeling to know I can start it and stop it. If I thought I was going to have a steady diet of this for the next month, fuck you! I ain't goin' for it, Jack! But as has been the case, at times I've had to do a lot of it. Ideally, the music should be so good and connect so immediately through the media to the public that one would be completely supported in all one's activities and desires without ever doing any of this. No interviews, no videos, no pictures, nothing. In fact, everybody knows by this point – especially everybody under 25 knows – that there is nothing more uncool than to be famous. It's gone full circle. It's really fucking uncool. People don't know that yet, but people under 25 sense it now. They're still not sure, and they're still fascinated with fame, but it's already become like having warts. Having said that, there are a lot of goodies that come with it! And it doesn't really bother me. But after about the fourth or fifth hour, I start to get bleary. So when I'm talkin' to you about it, I start to drift off just like math class or something. And you have to come back on cue. Deal with this. So I'll listen to what you're saying and try to talk a lot. Otherwise, I don't have a problem with it. I mean, the identity stuff and all that, what's interesting about my name is that given the period when I got it – which was in the late 60s – it was a hell of a lot more shocking and colorful than most peoples' names were who did what I do. It was like, "Oh, fuck! That's daring!" And it used

to get people all mad when they heard about it, or people would start laughing. A lot of people make it sound like, "Eeegy, eeewwww!" Like it had snot coming out of it, which is kind of cool, in a way. But other than that, now there are these people who are trying to out-do that. There's these people like...

TS: G.G. Allin?

Iggy: Yeah, like G.G. Allin. So it doesn't really bother me. It's just something you do. You shouldn't have to do anything, but one does. It's not a perfect world.

TS: I think there are a lot of people who also missed the idea of Iggy Pop's true importance. As with G.G. Allin, there seem to be a lot of kids who think the point of what you did was to try to kill yourself, basically, night after night.

Iggy: I would hear these little rumblings about G.G. when he was around, and about Jimmy Gestapo and this one and that one. Ultimately, look: It really doesn't matter if you go out and rub poop on people in the front row! If your song is really fucking well-written and good, and you can sing it over and over no matter what sort of circumstances the world is throwing at you, then you know what? You can be weird or you can be straight. And sooner or later, you'll get over it. You can be fuckin' Leslie Gore, too! That's OK. You really don't have to be any particular thing. And all the rest of that stuff is like: He did it in a dress, he did it in lipstick, he did it up the bum, he did it in the ear, y'know? No, he's an astronaut. No, he's a cosmonaut. It's a bird, it's a plane, it's Jesus Christ, it's Satan. It's all the same shit. The rest of that shit is window dressing. But I would imagine that my shit wouldn't have been around as long as it has been if it wasn't pretty well-structured. So there must be some structure there, I guess.

TS: The importance to me was that you survived all the things that you did to yourself, and that you did to your audiences, and you're still here doing incredible work, even at this age. I'm sitting here at 35 years old looking at you and thinking, "My God, I could continue doing this!"

Iggy: That's part of the idea. That's part

of the use. It's occurred to me a couple of times as I hit 50. I thought, "Well, I could be useful to people on a certain level who are looking long term." I remember that I had such people when I was in my twenties and I was going: "Wow! Chuck Berry! Wow! Bo Diddley! Wow! Little Walter! Wow!" And even Dylan and the Stones impressed me that way, 'cos even though they were younger and poppier, I could tell they were serious. So anyone who was serious at it, basically I'd go: "Woww, that's coool! Woaaaaah!" When you're a kid, you don't think anything much more articulated than "Woaaaaah! That's coool!" But that's enough, and I always thought in the long term. I never thought of it as disposable. And I was always really aware that there was a disposable pop world. And I knew that there was a quality, sort of music-lifer type world, and I knew that sometimes those two crossed. I knew the ones who were the best in the pop world were informed by that lifer world. But there was a difference, y'know? And I sort of dabbled in each a little bit more, but probably as time has gone on it's slightly more over to the lifer side. Slightly. But things are interesting.

TS: At the beginning of your recording career, for two albums in a row you did songs based around the year that they came out, taking a look at what was happening.

Iggy: Yeah!

TS: What if you did a song called 2001?

Iggy: (chuckling) We-heh-heh-hell!!

TS: What would you be singing about?

Iggy: It would probably be a question instead of a statement at this point. I'd probably ask, "What the fuck is going on?" I'd probably have to get guest vocalists. Yeah, young ones. To fill in the blanks.

TS: Like who?

Iggy: You could ask Sean Lennon. Little Bow Wow. Maybe Hector Camacho, Jr. I dunno, somebody in flamenco. Do you see my point? You'd have to ask somebody younger. Fuck if I know.

TS: I'd love to hear your observations, though. I mean, take a look at this: We got a presidency that was basically bought and sold...

Iggy: I don't write these things quickly. So I can't just throw it off to you. It takes time.

TS: The unfortunate thing is that it usually takes you a couple of years to get another record out. It'll have to be more like "2003!"

Iggy: (laughter) There ya go.

[Okay, I know what you bonehead-crunch-and-nothing-but fans are thinking: "Tim, there's not enough Stooges here!" Hey, ya gotta be crafty about this shit! Iggy's no intellectual midget, and he's here to promote "Beat 'Em Up," not "Funhouse"! So, I left the recorder running after announcing I had asked all my questions, then asked if he would sign my two favorite works of his: His book, *I Need More*, and "Raw Power". He gra-

ciously complied. As he signed the album, which was the roaring remix he did a few years back, he brought up the topic himself.]

Iggy: I like the original a lot. The remix was just to get it to...

TS: Iggy, there's **FINALLY A RHYTHM SECTION** on the fucking record!

Iggy: Exactly! Exactly. It wasn't just the technology. There was a really crappy bass sound on the fucking master tapes. I think Ron Asheton didn't like playing bass. He plays cool runs, but the sound is really weedy, like he doesn't give a shit: "Plonk-plonk-plonk..."

TS: He might not have. Listening to comments he's made in recent times...

Iggy: Yeah, he hated doing it, I know. He played good, though.

TS: You guys nearly got back together.

Iggy: (Clearly pained) Yeeeah. Not yet. (Begins walking towards the window, looking out at the street.)

TS: Think it'll happen?

Iggy: (snaps) I don't know. I don't know. I'm not in a hurry. I've got other things I can do, so...

TS: I honestly believe the best thing you've done for your music during the past ten, fifteen years has been retaining a steady band.

Iggy: Yeah. But I can go ahead and do the Stooges. I would do it more for Ron's brother, (drummer) Scott Asheton. He's really sweet, the drummer. He's a really sweet guy, and it would mean a lot to him. But I don't know. +

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Like a lot of times over the past twenty or so years, as of late I find myself truly obsessing about soul music. This should come as no great surprise to the folks who follow this column. As a matter of fact, back in my maiden effort for this mag I boasted 'bout just how superior in sound soul singles rack up against any and all 45 rpm competition, particularly when blaring from a bust-ass loud jukebox. While I'm admittedly a rock'n'roll fanatic first 'n' foremost (with pre-teen exposure to Black Sabbath's "Sabotage" tour on "Don Kirschner's Rock Concert", how did I have a choice?), soul has been there nearly as long. As a matter of fact, I bought my first soul album — the appropriately titled "A Little Bit Of Soul" by the Tams — at least a few months before scoring my first MC5 or Stooges record.

Soul is a big part of growing up around here (i.e., in North Carolina). Regionally, the favorite strain is a sweeter, smoother alternative to the more gut-busting James Brown and Wilson Pickett scream-a-thons. For better or worse, most folks around here call it "beach music". It has nothing to do with surfboards and reverb, though its practitioners have noticeably grown paler of complexion in the years since the heyday of authentic southern soul scene-makers like Maurice Williams & the Zodiacs, Doug Clark & the Hot Nuts (raunch division) and, of course, the Tams. Personally, I can't be bothered by the locally ever-popular lily-white lounge music of "beach" mainstays like the Embers. Their ongoing existence is most likely linked to entertainment considerations at corporate pep rallies and golf events; that and lazy middle-aged nostalgia. But the undying popularity of beach music here keeps even the big commercial "oldies" stations regularly spinning oddball R&B that can't possibly be played anywhere else in the country. (For example, just today on a local commercial oldies station, my ears picked up the unstoppable yet nationally unknown "Washed Ashore" by the Platters, from their mid-sixties revival-slash-soul period. A surprisingly great record!).

Two nights ago, I did my part to further the cause. For three hours, I had the opportunity on a local radio station to spin my all-time favorite soul tunes. To alert my Internet brethren, I sent out an advance notice for the show that warned: "If looking for Northern Soul super-obscurity, this ain't the place." With a few days now to reflect, I'll admit that this disclaimer, which referred to the UK-derived movement of similar stomping sounds, was somewhat steeped in inferiority; since I do not possess either the deepest knowledge or the record collection to handle all the obscurities. But I worship this stuff and, to be honest, most often respond to the great hits (though many of 'em were just regional in their popularity, which bears repeating) and turntable faves that I was first exposed to, thanks to a fake ID and a local beer-by-the-bucket beach music hangout, c.'79. While just as amateurish as always, my soul show the other night succeeded in delivering the musical goods. It covered all the bases, drawing from sources as obvious as Rhino Records' fantabulous 'n' definitive "Beg, Scream & Shout" box set of sixties soul (despite some quirky choices, at six CDs it provides the best overview of the era), Stax-Volt no-brainers, and — with a flip of my longest finger to the obscurity-obsessed sheep that equate popularity with uncoolness — plenty of Tamla-Motown.

On this latter point, no one here is denying the inhuman hourly "oldies" radio overexposure of the Supremes' "Stop In The Name Of Love". However, sandwiched between non-"Hitsville

USA" classics from Billy Stewart, Jackie Wilson, and the Chairmen of the Board, to name a few, Motown movers like the Miracles ("Mickey's Monkey"), Temptations ("Get Ready"), Vandellas ("Come And Get These Memories") and the Isleys ("This Old Heart Of Mine") sounded their most potent, at least to these ears, in a long, long while. Come to think of it, the best of the bunch was by none other than the Supremes — one of the sultriest grooves of

JUKEBOX JURY

BY JEFF JAREMA

all, "Love Is Like An Itchin' In My Heart" (for convenience, it's included in the aforementioned Rhino box).

Since I possess two left feet, I'm a bit less fanatical 'bout the funk. That's not to say we didn't pump out a riot of sound on the radio with a candidate for my numero uno James Brown battle — an alternate version of "Give It Up Or Turn It Loose" (on the "In The Jungle Groove" CD from '86, which contains the bitchin'est drum break ever, courtesy of Clyde Stubblefield), as well as my co-host's pick to click, "North Carolina" by the Poets of Rhythm (another mother worth searching out). "Get In The Groove", from Norton Records' action-packed new Mighty Hannibal CD, also dealt a rhythm that killed. While I didn't delve deeply into the (great!) proto-disco Gamble/Huff sound of the mid-seventies, a shoe-in for Showtime was Harold Melvin & the Blue Notes. Due to my patchy record collection, I could only manage a CD version of "Bad Luck, Part One", so Part Two, as a laugh, was exhumed from a crappy-quality Philadelphia International 45. Sometimes, you gotta do what you gotta do.

The biggest treat of all were the short sets spotlighting soul heroes such as Stax semi-legend Eddie Floyd ("Raise Your Hand", "Holding On With Both Hands", "Big Bird"), Bobby Bland (zoning in on his cocktail soul era, c. '64, with "Blue Moon", "Honey Child", "Ain't Nothing You Can Do"; what a voice!), and the especially uplifting Archie Bell & the Drells (Atlantic era, with "Tighten Up", "Do The Hand Jive", "Girl You're Too Young"). If time had allowed, I could have played the latter all night. Unfortunately, due to the clock, equal time was not given to the supremely unsung William Bell, Willie Tee, and Howard Tate (only one song each). James & Bobby Purify deserved more than two cuts, but at least one choice was definitive, the truly unstoppable "I Was Born To Lose" (my kinda funk, Muscle Shoals-style; the same which could be said for what followed, "Funky Street" by Arthur Conley).

One goal of the show was to spend an awful lot of time with artists from the under-appreciated Hi Records label. Thankfully, at least a good chunk of an hour was afforded Hi singer/non-chart talent Don Bryant. Tunes like "Doin' The Mustang" and "That Driving Beat" (a Willie Mitchell release featuring Don's shredding pipes) are not to be believed. Search

HIT SQUAD

out the "Doin' The Mustang" CD, which is hopefully still in print on Demon/Hi Records (UK). Besides several Willie Mitchell instrumentals, including the best Meters rip-off you're ever likely hear in a cover of "My Babe", the rest of this chapter in the show was focused on Al Green. Bypassing the hits, I figured the handful of listeners ought instead to hear Al's formative days at Hi, when he tried many styles, mostly more uptempo than his downright delicate hits. Given the many Al Green songs to choose from, the short list included "Tomorrow's Dream" and a cover of "Talk To Me", both from Al's '69 Hi LP, "Green Is Blues", one random sample from his commercial peak ("Stand Up", from the "Call Me" album), and a pair of outtakes ("Listen" and "Up Above My Head"). The two outtakes are collected along with many other winners on yet another Demon/Hi release, this time to be found in the "Al Green" section of the store — the unimaginatively-titled "Listen: The Rarities". Recommended, despite leaving off early, non-LP singles "I Want To Hold Your Hand" and "True Love".

(To digress, I recently read Al's anticipated autobiography, *Take Me To The River*. Besides the holy rolling from the

Reverend, it had its moments, particularly the last-ditch chance meeting with Willie Mitchell in '68; also, Green's view of his early Hi recordings, where he dismisses covers/turds like "Light My Fire" and "Get Back". On a related Memphis angle, next time at a big book chain, look in the "bargain" bin for an enjoyable dung heap of a read titled *Echoes Of The Sixties* by Marti Smiley Childs & Jeff March. A healthy amount of the book is dedicated to individual interviews with each of the original and GREAT Sam the Sham & the Pharaohs or, in the case of the deceased

David Martin, his widow and daughter! There are lots of drugs and construction work from the likes of the Lovin' Spoonful, Sam's Shams, and Iron Butterfly).

Back to my endless radio replay (apologies, but I'm trying to de-program you punks and get you doing the "Mustang"), the whole shingaling appropriately opened with Otis Redding and, three hours later, shut down with William Bell's "Tribute To A King" (for Otis), fol-

lowed with a finale of Redding, live in Europe, with "Try A Little Tenderness" (which was somehow passed over in favor of the rushed Monterey Pop version on Rhino's Big "O" box set. I've never understood that decision).

My original plan was to spend the last few minutes of my allocated on-air time taking a left turn from the soul and spinning highlights from recent reissues of Buffalo Springfield, the Yardbirds, and Spencer Davis Group. The Spencer Davis Group,

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featuring Steve Winwood, briefly rocked the charts in '66/'67 with a throbbing, soul-infused sound. Their records were as earthy as the Animals and Them, thanks to teenage Stevie's remarkable vocal approximation of Ray Charles. In the US, there's been no CD reissue worth spitting at until this latest rescue mission from Sundazed. It's virtually all here on their repress of the old 'Gimme Some Lovin' and 'I'm A Man' albums, each with bonus tracks a-plenty. Highly recommended.

Rhino has simultaneously released big sets by Buffalo Springfield (a 4-CD box set) and the Yardbirds (a more digestible double-disc). The Springfield set breaks new ground in obviousness by boldly emblazoning itself with the title "Box Set". It's wonderful to have four full CDs of their recordings, but when you consider that they only released three albums in their day, just what has Rhino crammed in this package? Well, for one thing, anything that mattered from their original catalog, all remastered splendidly. One glaring exception is the absence of the single mix of Neil Young's "Mr. Soul", with alternative ostrich guitar and an even more insistent sound than the better-known album version. Curiously, a badly-deteriorated acetate is included that sounds much the same as the single, albeit in no-fi. What gives?

On a posthumous, long-deleted Springfield comp LP released in the early seventies, a raging 9:00 minute version of Steve Stills' "Bluebird" appeared. However, that extended outing is nowhere to be found on this box. Instead, it's the same old (and to be fair, intended) "Buffalo Springfield Again" take, duplicated twice. In fact, a whopping 23 tracks are duplicated twice...in the same versions! On top of that, disc one features a 50/50 split between finished band recordings and less captivating acoustic demos. The unreleased full-Springfield performances are interesting, and occasionally even essential (like "Neighbor Don't You Worry", which has similarities to Moby Grape's "Omaha", which it predates). It's the everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink overview of the Buffalo Springfield. More rational minds would have suggested a 2-CD set, but this seems to be a closely-held project of Neil Young, so Rhino should nonetheless be applauded for the deluxe packaging.

The Yardbirds were a far cry more influential than Buffalo Springfield. And judging by their new Rhino set and rave-ups like "Stroll On" and "I Ain't Done Wrong", about a hundred times more exciting, too. Nearly every guitar-wielding teenager in the mid-sixties had at least an appreciation for the Yardbirds, if not absolute reverence for their key axe master, Jeff Beck (whose tenure during the creative and commercial peak was bookended with stints by Eric Clapton and, in the end, Jimmy Page). The Yardbirds have been anthologized hundreds of times, with quality control typically out of the equation. For the first time, Rhino has collected recordings from all phases of the band's career, from '63 to '68. With the exception of weak pairings at the start and close of disc one, as well as some low points apparent in the Page-era assembly, this CD contains little padding. With classics like "I'm A Man", "Shapes Of Things", "I Wish You Would", "For Your Love", "Heart Full Of Soul", "Over Under Sideways Down", "Lost Woman" and "Happening Ten Years Time Ago", this qualifies as the most essential CD in eons.

Stop presses: Just today, I received a DMZ's "Live At The Rat" CD on Bomp, which collects a high quality and even higher energy set from '76, followed by a '93 reunion that, well...I guess you had to be there. If you're curious, I recommend major wax buildup before blasting the squealing earache reunion version of "Cinderella". Liner notes have been boring me to tears lately, yet I must say the Monoman-penned ramblings in the DMZ CD are high entertainment indeed. Better yet are the autobiographical exploits catalogued in the aforementioned Might Hannibal CD

JEFF JAREMA

on Norton (or, for the ultimate fan perspective, Cub Coda's fine liners to the Rhino Yardbirds set). Even better than the music, which has its moments (as several of you claimed in *HL* #14), is Doug Sheppard's retelling in "Re-tired", a punk comp of Akron's Rubber City Rebels (on the White Noise label).

Last but not loudest, and also arriving in the mail this week, is Norton's "Friday At The Hideout" comp of notorious Detroit-area teen combos predating the violence of the Stooges by a full three years. If you ain't yet buying my claim, just dig the death trip of "What A Way To Die" by the Pleasure Seekers (hey, their second appearance in "Juke Box Jury" in as many columns) or the utter insensitivity of "Get Down On Your Knees" by the Underdogs. Bob Seger is lurking about on these tracks (he is co-credited on "Knees", for one cool thing) and there's even an ace nugget featuring Glenn Frey (the Mushrooms)! Billy Miller delivers the scoop on this suburban scene, so chalk it up as yet another set of liner notes to compliment beer.

NOTICE TO RECORD COMPANIES: Please, could one of you get off your ass and reissue these much-missing 45's (...that would sound nice on my jukebox, although I already own many on crappy sounding, beat-up polystyrene). In most cases, I've come up with my own creative configurations. Here are two dozen random suggestions to start with. Mono mixes only, please. I could list a few hundred of these.

Group	A-side	B-side
Seeds	Pushin' Too Hard	Out Of The Question
Seeds	Can't Seem To Make You Mine	Daisy Mae
Seeds	No Escape	Nobody Spoil My Fun
Seeds	Satisfy You	Evil Hoodoo
Remains	Don't Look Back	Once Before
Paul Revere & The Raiders	Steppin' Out	Stepping Stone
Pink Floyd	Arnold Layne	See Emily Play
Electric Prunes	I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night	Get Me To The World On Time
Mouse/Mouse & Traps	A Public Execution	Maid of Sugar Maid of Spice
Thirteenth Floor	You're Gonna Miss Me	Reverberation (Doubt)
Elevators	I Feel Free	NSU
Cream	I Wish You Would	I Ain't Got You
Yardbirds	Stroll On	Psycho Daisies
Easybeats	Sorry	She's So Fine
Standells	Help Yourself	Big Boss Man
Them	It's All Over Now Baby Blue	Mystic Eyes
Strawberry Alarm Clock	Tomorrow	Sit With the Guru
Leaves	Hey Joe	Too Many People
Count Five	Psychotic Reaction	Double Decker Bus
Iggy & the Stooges	Search & Destroy	Your Pretty Face is Going to Hell
Velvet Underground	Waiting For The Man	Guess I'm Falling In Love (Instr version only!)
Velvet Underground	I Heard Her Call My Name	Here She Comes Now
Velvet Underground	Sweet Jane	Rock 'n' Roll
Moving Sidewalks	99th Floor	Every Night A New Surprise



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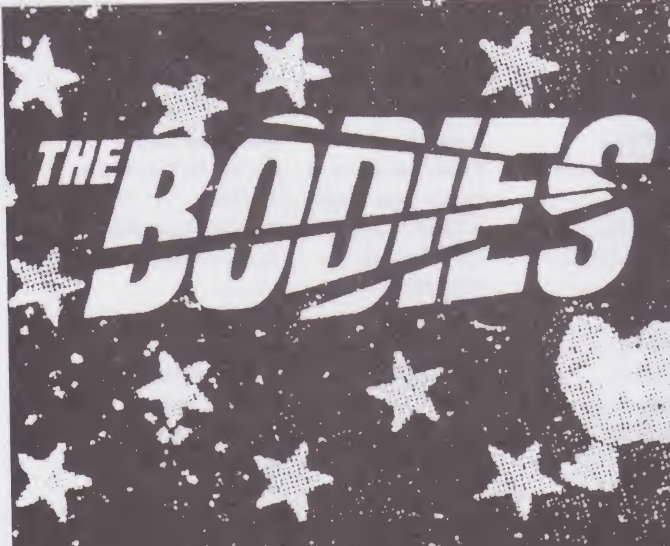
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YEAH...I HATE

Believe it or not, I'm finally able to write about something I actually like in this horrible day and age: the High School Reject label/releases out of Holland. The brainstorm of Koos Terwisscha van Scheltinga, a Dutch rock 'n' roll enthusiast who proclaimed that the MEAN RED SPIDERS' demented 70's punker "Rejected At The High School Dance" was the definitive r'n'r number. I'm honored, to say the least, having fronted the MEAN RED SPIDERS and written this senseless song (which, incidentally, is a true story), that someone would show such an interest in it. In any case, Koos formed the High School Reject Records label, and has released several boss-stock kick-ass recordings. The common denominator is this - all bands on the label must do a version of "Rejected At The High School Dance"! Really! Honest, this wasn't my idea, but rather Koos'. So far, five records have been released, all of which are ultra-stock. Koos claims that #1 in the "Rejected" series was the original version on Buster Bulb Records (which, in some cases, was pressed on piss yellow vinyl). Here's a run-down of the others:

#2: The KIRKS, now defunct, from Keene, New Hampshire. These guys were totally kick-ass. They played really SAVAGE KILLER PUNK ROCK, not this sissy crap that masses of assholes now listen to. 100% great.

#3: The HOT POCKETS, 3/4 of whom are from Groningen in The Netherlands and 1/4 of which is from Montreal, Canada. Needless to say, this is SAVAGE and fucking DYNAMITE. They also do a cool version of the CORTINAS' 1977 fave-rave, "Fascist Dictator". Highly recommended.

#4: MOORAT FINGERS, from Bremen, Germany. This is a little more on the bizarre side, but it still has an edge. Not as kick-ass as the the above releases, but cool nonetheless.

#5: GREEN HORNET, from Groningen in The Netherlands. A cool, almost blues-influenced group. None of that Robert Cray junk, though. It's more in the tradition of "St. James Infirmary", i.e., real moody.

#6: SUPERHELICOPTER, LTD., from Oldenburg, Germany. Another BARBARIC KILLER record which sounds like it was recorded in a garage with everything on "10". Highly recommended.

Actually, all of these can be highly recommended. If you like the NY DOLLS, DEAD BOYS, and CRIME, this is your scene. It's really wonderful stuff. #7 should be out by the time you read this, a disc by the Columbian Neckties. I haven't heard it yet, but I'm sure it will be a knock-out. Thank God there are still some real rock 'n' roll bands around. Contact Koos for copies and more info at: ktvs@yahoo.com.

What else? A band from Rochester, NY - the VERTIGO-GOS - put out a really stock release, "Anthology: 1998-2000" Unfortunately, they've already broken up. Great surf/psych instrumentals which are cool enough to sound like they were lifted from an A.I.P. soundtrack. Really boss stuff that reminds me of the VENTURES' "Action" album - it's not totally surf, but not totally rock instrumental, either. I like it a lot, and it's available from Garage Pop Records/Box 88003/Rochester, NY 14618.

Otherwise, everything remains pretty worthless. As always, it seems that the media are just fascinated with pointless rubbish. For example, I read in the paper today that manly dyke Ellen's

ex-girlfriend was going to be on all the talk shows, and that the interview on the Barbara Walters' show was going to be "shocking." Does anyone really care? It certainly can't be any more shocking than looking at Michael Jackson! People who watch this kind of tripe should get a fucking life. And speaking of Michael Jackson, the media are gearing up to promote his musical comeback as if it was the Second Coming. What a FREAK this guy is! Well, at least he's unintentionally comical, which is more than I can say about lots of other stuff. Read on...

What else has recently hypnotized the masses? For one thing, an increasingly fat Mariah Carey had a nervous



**GREG
PREVOST**

breakdown. What a crying shame! You've got people living on the streets in this country, and this rich bitch with no talent is always whining about her "problems". Her biggest problem was that she finally got booted off of Columbia Records after her 15 minutes of undeserved hair-brained glory. Personally, I don't think she'll be able to fuck her way to the Top 10 again. She apparently doesn't think so either, so no wonder she's having a breakdown. The power of the box doesn't apply to her anymore, so it's time to flush her down the toilet with all the other dreck. Speaking of dreck, I noticed that another poor little rich girl called Aaliyah died in a plane crash. That was terribly unfortunate, but now all of these idiots are acting like some amazing musical GENIUS had died, judging by their processions, vigils, and eulogies. This "human interest" story must have been on the front page of the mainstream newspapers for at least three days in a row. Meanwhile, a real ICON named John Lee Hooker also recently died, and instead of a front page media blitz all those fuckers did was throw a stamp-sized obit in the back inside pages. I guess he just wasn't as important as some 22-year old Janet Jackson wannabe. When will these retards get the picture? Apparently never.

Finally, I've noticed that a whole rash - and I do mean rash - of "reality" shows are coming to TV this Fall. That way everyone is happy - the big wheels at the networks don't have to pay these idiots to eat maggots in front of 20 million geeks, the idiots don't have to join the Screen Actors Guild, and scriptwriters are not needed. The networks thus stand to make millions more by pandering to the jerks who are dumb enough to find all this entertaining. What a pathetic society we are currently living in. ☺

Adolph

Adolph & the Piss Artists

INTRODUCTION BY
STONEWALL
BLACKSON;
INTERVIEW BY
JANE SMITH



ATLANTA, GEORGIA IS HOME TO MANY THINGS – THE BRAVES BASEBALL TEAM, FINE SOUTHERN CUISINE, HISTORICAL SITES LIKE OAKWOOD CEMETERY, AND THE SUMMER OLYMPICS IN THE EARLY '90S. ATLANTA IS ALSO HOME TO A PRETTY DECENT PUNK AND STREET ROCK SCENE. SEVERAL BANDS OF THAT GENRE HAVE EMERGED FROM ATLANTA TO MAKE THEIR MARK ON THE WORLD OF UNDERGROUND MUSIC. VENUES LIKE THE METROPLEX, CLUB 688, THE POINT, AND THE 513 CLUB, ALLOWED LOUD AND BOISTEROUS BANDS LIKE THE ANTI-HEROS, MOONSTOMP, TIME BOMB 77, BRICKWALL UNITED, JACK THE LAD, AND MISSION OF MURDER TO VENT THEIR AGGRESSION.

TODAY,

A NEWER WAVE OF PUNK HAS TAKEN OVER. ALTHOUGH THE AFOREMENTIONED CLUBS MAY NO LONGER EXIST, THE FURY AND POWER THAT DROVE THE BANDS TO SPREAD THEIR MESSAGE STILL EXISTS. WITH NEWER BANDS LIKE TERMINUS CITY, THE BREAKAWAYS, NO HOLDS BARRED, AND, AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP, ADOLF & THE PISS ARTISTS, ATLANTA HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT IT IS BACK ON THE ATTACK. THE BAND IS LED BY CHET KNIGHT, A DIE-HARD SCENE VETERAN WHO ALSO OWNS AND RUNS HIS OWN RECORD LABEL CALLED 45 REVOLUTIONS, WHO IS BACKED UP BY STUART S.O.B. AND WARREN HATE. APA NOT ONLY SET THE STANDARD FOR PUNK ROCK IN CONTEMPORARY ATLANTA, BUT ALSO MAINTAIN THE SOUND AND FURY OF THE LEGENDARY ATLANTA BANDS WHO INSPIRED THEM.

Jane Smith (JS): Let's go ahead and establish the essentials. Who's in the band, what do they do, when did A.P.A. start, and all that sort of stuff.

Chet Knight (CK): Okay, the band is currently Stuart SOB on bass, Warren Hate on guitar, and myself on vocals and

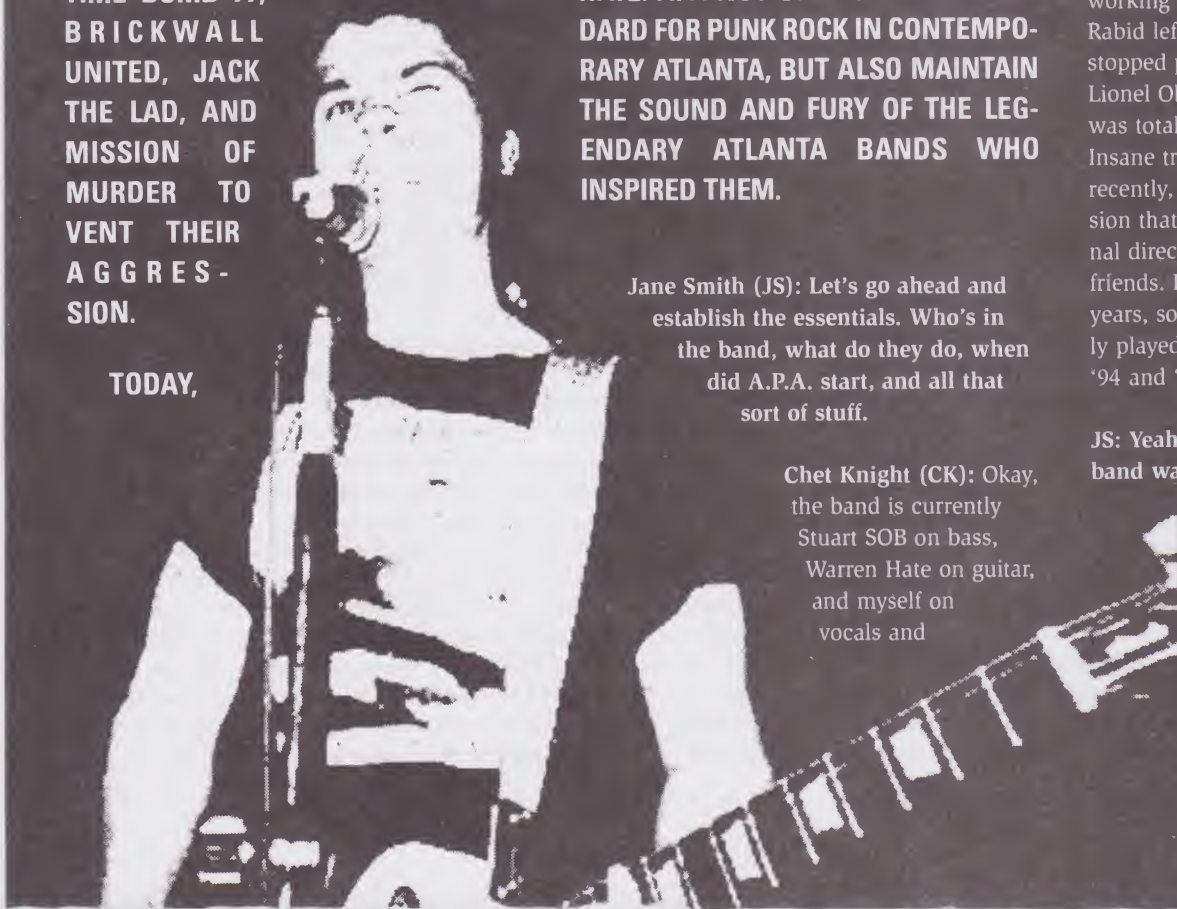
guitar. Don from the Anti-Heros is playing drums for us right now, and we hope that will become more permanent. If not, Phil from the Templars has offered to help us out. He's doing the Beer Olympics gig with us next weekend.

JS: That brings up a question that I wasn't planning on asking, but what's the deal with you guys and drummers? I mean, basically it's been the three main members and a million different drummers.

CK: I don't know what the deal is, to be honest. We've never really had a problem working with any of our drummers. Bunny Rabid left on her own accord and just stopped playing music for a while. Then Lionel ObRiot moved back to France, which was totally unexpected. After that, Amos Insane tried out and played with us. Until recently, when the band came to the conclusion that we should move more in the original direction of just kind of jamming with friends. I've known both Don and Phil for years, so they were obvious choices. I actually played in Time Bomb 77 with Don back in '94 and '95.

JS: Yeah, I remember, back when that band was good. Other than just jamming with friends, what was the original direction of APA? You know, what was it like then, and what's different now?

CK: Back then, it was a totally underground kind of thing. Nobody even knew we existed.



I'm referring to the period around 1996. We never played shows, and never even planned on playing shows. We just practiced in the back room of my house and had fun. I had a bunch of songs left over from before Time Bomb 77 that we were practicing. When we finally got them down good enough, we went to a guy who had a studio in his house. It was a real low-budget production on that first 7", "Heroes?". That's kind of when things changed, I guess. We got a lot of positive feedback about that release, which kind of surprised us at the time, because it was basically only demo-quality stuff. We had people calling us up all the time and asking us to play shows, which we still had never done. Finally, we decided to go ahead and really have a go at it.

JS: Then what happened? How did you go from releasing a home-produced studio 7" to where you are now?

CK: I guess the first thing we did was ask Warren to join the band. He hadn't played on the first 7", although I wish he had. We thought we needed more power in our sound to be able to carry it off live. On record, I did a couple of guitar tracks, some leads and stuff, that I had to leave out when

I was singing. So we got Warren.

JS: Where did Warren come from? He was just a teenager back then, right?

CK: Yeah, he was. I think he was 16, maybe 17. He was the younger brother of a friend of ours, and Stuart had played with him before. I guess people might not know this, but we've only played one solitary show as a three-piece. We opened for the Business in a warehouse, and we were pretty bad. If we ever had doubts about the idea of adding another guitarist, that show made it pretty clear that we needed to.

JS: So what's different now?

CK: Well, there are some obvious differences. We've gone from low-budget self-produced demos to GMM's production studio. We've gone from not wanting to even get involved in the live music scene to touring with bands like Major Accident. You know, it's like night and day really.

JS: How many tours have you done now?

CK: A lot of little one- or two-week deals. Our first was opening for the Drones in

1998, and since then we've gone out with the Boils and the Krays, as well as with Major Accident, as I just mentioned.

JS: I know you probably get asked this a lot, but where did the name come from?

CK: An old British punk rock song by the Valves, "For Adolfs Only".

JS: What does it mean?

CK: Nothing, it's just a joke. I mean, it's kind of poking fun at Hitler, but it's not political or anything.

JS: Do you ever get any shit about it?

CK: No, not really. Just the odd question or two. It's stupid. No genuinely Nazi band would name themselves Adolf & the Piss Artists!

JS: Is A.P.A. the polite way, the radio-friendly way, to say your name?

CK: Not for me. It's just easier, or quicker. I do think sometimes that other people use it for that reason, though. It doesn't really bother me one way or the other. We are

"I JUST CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH WHAT EVERY LITTLE MAMA'S BOY PUNK ROCKER IS GOING TO THINK ABOUT MY BAND'S NAME."



what we are, you know?

JS: That leads directly to the next question: what are you? Are you a streetpunk band? A '77 punk band? An Oi band?

CK: Yes.

JS: "Yes" to all three?

CK: Sure, and more. We just play music. Warren likes to call it Skunk Rock, as in Skins and Punks. I hear us described a million different ways, which I personally think is cool.

JS: Speaking of skinheads, can we tackle that dirty subject?

CK: Yeah, sure, but what's so "dirty" about it?

JS: Well, you definitely have skinheads attending your shows.

CK: Of course, but as far as I know they're not Nazis.

JS: I realize that, but given the band's name, it may a bit much for the uninitiated.

CK: Well, then they should get initiated. They should come and see the shows, and judge us on that basis.

JS: Don't you think new people might not come out if they don't get the joke?

CK: Maybe. There goes our opening slot with Blink-182! Fuck it. You know, I'm not into marketing, I'm into punk.

JS: Okay, I hear you loud and clear.

CK: I don't mean to sound like a dick, but I just can't be bothered with what every little mama's boy punk rocker is going to think about my band's name. And the truth is, we're spending a lot more time talking about it than is warranted here. People really don't ever ask us about it. The name's just too ridiculous.

JS: Let's talk about your releases, then. Could you list them in chronological order?

CK: Sure, we had "Heroes?" in 1997, then "we did a live split 7" with the Drones in '98. Later that year we put out "This Is Your Law", another 7". In December of 1999, we recorded the "Zero Hour" CD.

JS: All of those are on your own label, 45 Revolutions, except for "Zero Hour", which is on GMM, right?

CK: Yeah, but "Zero Hour" will appear on vinyl through 45 Revs too.

JS: I was looking over some press clippings about "Zero Hour", and it seems like you've really made a mark with it. Half of the reviewers are hailing you guys as the Second Coming or something equally world-transforming. How do you feel about all this attention?

CK: Naturally I'm happy that so many people like the CD, but I don't get too worked up about it. Once you start believing your own hype, you're dead. That's when you start referring to yourself in the third-person!

JS: I was just impressed with some of the comparisons - bands like Blitz, Toxic Reasons, 4 Skins, One Way System, even Social Distortion - being that I'm kind of an old punk myself. I mean, that's punk rock royalty right there.

CK: Of course, we like all those bands, and to that extent it's flattering. But what does it matter at the end of the day, really?

JS: Well, it seems like your lyrics are getting a good deal of the attention. I know that's important to you, since it's obvious from the way you write that you want them to be heard.

CK: Yeah, that is important to me, you're right. It's much more important than getting





"I WILL SAY THAT IF PEOPLE FIND MY LYRICS INSPIRING, THAT MAKES ME HAPPY. I HOPE IT INSPIRES THEM TO DO THEIR OWN THING, THOUGH."

pats-on-the-back from fanzine writers.

JS: I've got a review right here that calls you a "street-philosopher reminiscent of the old punk greats, like a modern day Jimmy Pursey". Of course, everyone knows what happened to him when that sort of pressure got to be too great.

CK: I don't see much chance of that happening with me. I mean, Sham 69 were huge, and were an inspiration to thousands of kids at the time. We're not nearly that big. Hell, punk rock's not even that big anymore!

JS: Well, some kids seem to feel that you're an inspiring character, and so I think that comparison with Pursey is right on the mark. There may be responsibilities that come along with that...

CK: Again, there were at least ten times as many Sham fans back then as there are APA fans now. I will say that if people find my lyrics inspiring, that makes me

happy. I hope it inspires them to do their own thing, though. Maybe that's where Sham's influence went awry, when a million kids wanted to emulate them instead of finding their own way.

JS: I specifically wanted to ask about a couple songs. Lyrically, these just stand out. They seem to be personal stories, and I wanted to get some background on them. Tell me about "Terminators", "Pushed Aside", and "Stand Alone".

CK: Well, all three of those were inspired by the neighborhood I grew up in.

JS: Southside Atlanta?

CK: Yeah, specifically the Grant Park/Cabbagetown area. "Terminators" deals with the old Cabbagetown mill about a mile from my house. It's about how our whole neighborhood used to be completely dependent on that mill for survival, and how badly workers were treated back then.

Cabbagetown is one of the two original Atlanta slums. This was during segregation, and our neighborhood was the white slum. "Stand Alone" is basically a look back at my youth, how I tried to do what I thought was right, and some of the bullshit that I went through because of that...

JS: The middle part of the song, the "I stood alone against the crowd" part.

CK: Yeah, that tells that story.

JS: You were actually shot for speaking your mind and making trouble for some people who had that whole neighborhood living in fear.

CK: Well, I was no angel myself, but that is what happened. The song is about how I see kids in the neighborhood today still doing the same shit, following the crowd, and just heading nowhere.

JS: Now, I know a little about "Pushed

Aside", as I've heard some stories about what went on in Grant Park and Cabbagetown in the early 90s. How many of those stories are true?

CK: Probably about half of them. I don't know. Which stories have you heard?

JS: Okay, how about the one where you supposedly jumped out of a car with a gun to break up a mugging?

CK: Yeah, that's a true story.

JS: Okay, and in the song you mention graffiti, which I saw first-hand, but also arson.

CK: Well, there were some crazy things that went on.

JS: That's all you're going to tell me?

CK: You know, the stories aren't that important now, because in the end we lost the war. The neighborhood has been gentrified. Me and my aunt next door are the only original residents left on the block. So now I just get a kick out of being the white trash fly in

their middle-class ointment.

JS: What are things currently like in the Atlanta scene?

CK: It's kind of dead right now. There are no DIY clubs, only big mainstream venues, so smaller bands have no shot of playing here. And big clubs like that also seem to alienate people. In our band, I know that Warren especially dislikes them. We still play those clubs, though, because there are no real alternatives right now. There are a lot of great bands in Atlanta, but there's nowhere cool to play.

JS: What do you consider to be APA's greatest strength and weakness?

CK: I personally think our strength lies in the fact that everyone in the band believes in each other. I have complete confidence in the integrity of the music, because I trust Stuart and Warren 100%. Five years of hard work together will do that. You may think it's silly, but every time I walk out on stage with them, I consider it an honor.

JS: And your main weakness?

CK: Other than indulging in too much free beer backstage before we go on? Probably the drummer issue. It would really be nice to find a drummer who we felt as strongly about as we feel about each other. We're working on that.

JS: Assuming that you get your drummer situation worked out, are you guys planning any new releases or tours?

CK: Actually, we've already written six or seven new songs. As soon as we can get Don up to speed on them, I think we're going to try to do a new 7", hopefully by the end of the year. And then we'll start working on another full-length. There are no real tours scheduled right now, although a couple of shows with Menace are in the works. That's about it at the moment.

JS: Do you want to provide the readers with any contact info?

CK: Sure, you can email us at apapunk@hotmail.com. Or you can write us the old-fashioned way at 620 Hansell Street SE, Atlanta, GA 30312. If you're lucky we may even send you some free shit, you cheap bastards. †

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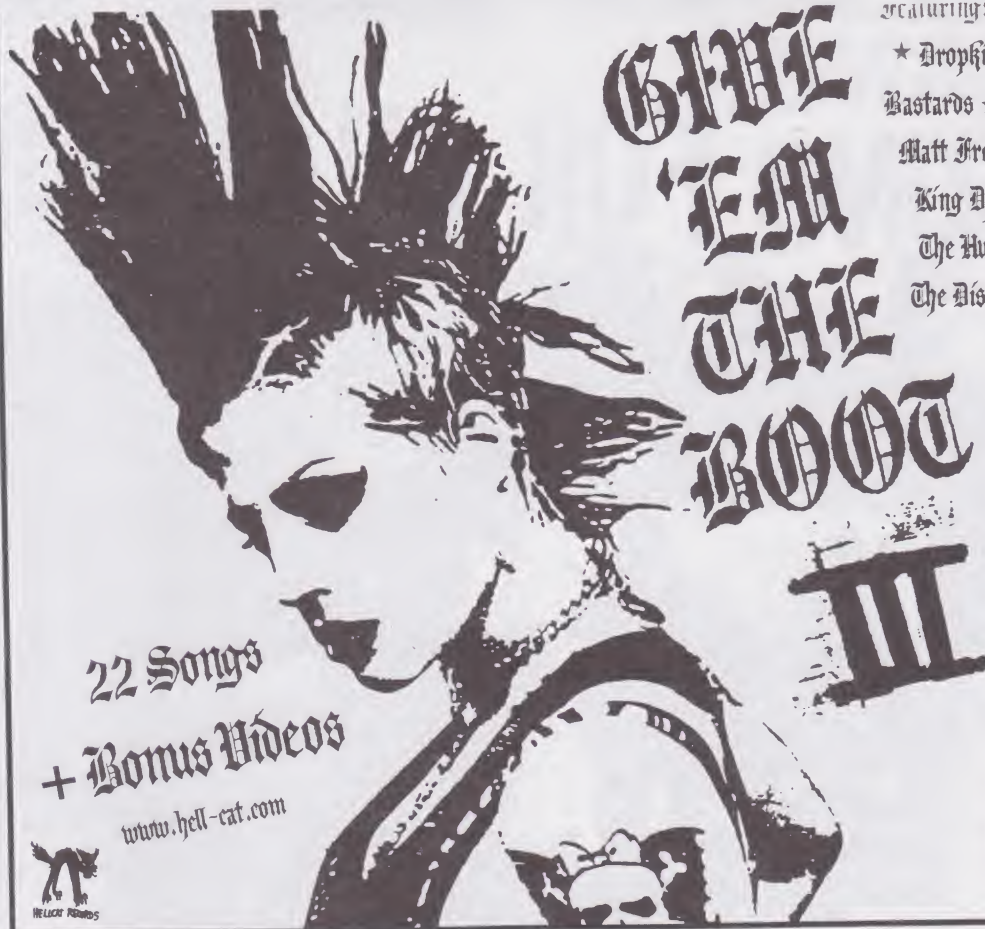


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AMERICA'S FIRST KNOWN POSTHUMOUS INTERVIEW WITH TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY

NØRB: Okay, uh, testing...testing...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: (pounds mat three times as if to indicate a pin of an opponent, but here also serving to parallel the invocation of "1-2-3" that often follows the phrase "testing...testing...")

NØRB: All right, i guess it's working...here we go...(clears throat)...okay, hot on the heels of *HitList*'s landmark first known posthumous interview with Joey Ramone, we're here today with recently deceased professional wrestler Terry "Bam Bam" Gordy, whom, as the reader will doubtless recall, was part of the Fabulous Freebirds all-red-neck 6-man tag team which wreaked havoc throughout the length and breadth of the wrestling world in the 1980's. For the record, Mr. Gordy's qualifications for being interviewed in a primarily music-oriented publication such as this one essentially revolve around the independently-released "Badstreet USA" 45 he and his associates released in the mid-80's. So, Mr. Gordy, where were you from originally?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: Badstreet, Atlanta Gee-Ay!!!

NØRB: I see. And was that indeed a particularly bad street?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADDEST STREET IN THE WHOLE USA!!!

NØRB: Now, when did you begin your pro wrestling career? Was that with Buddy Roberts in the Hollywood Blondes, or did you do something even more ludicrous prior to that?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADSTREET, ATLANTA GEE-AY!!!

NØRB: Errrrmmm...remember that time you slammed the steel cage door on Kerry Von Erich's head because that dumbass wouldn't accept the tainted world title victory (over, as best i recall, Ric Flair) that you were trying hand him on a frickin' platter?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADDEST STREET IN THE WHOLE USA!!!

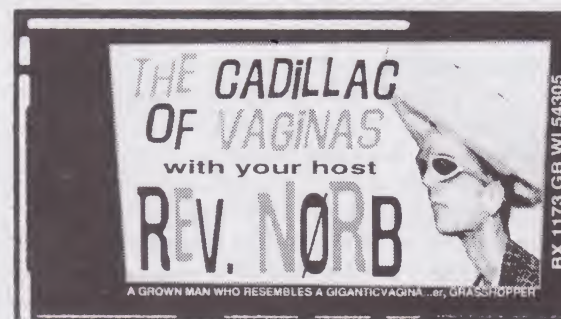
NØRB: Uhhrrr...these interviews usually go better with artists who had a greater body of recorded work in their mortal lifespan. You only had that one single, huh?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADSTREET, AT—

NØRB (interrupting): Yeah, yeah, fine, we get it, we get it. Let's try a different approach here. How do you like being dead?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: (extends arm fully outward with thumb parallel to ground, the traditional indication that he will shortly be applying his finishing hold, the "Oriental Spike" — which he learned from Killer Khan, who himself learned it from the ever mysterious "man on the mountain," whose identity remains a mystery to this day [though i tend to suspect that the "man on the mountain" was actually Billy White Wolf in disguise] — but, in this circumstance, with the thumb at exactly the halfway point between "thumbs up" and "thumbs down,"

indicates that Gordy feels a bit, as the French say, *comme ci, comme ça* [although they probably spell it differently, but, then again, they also drink coffee that tastes like a cross between Jägermeister and warmed-up animal vomit too, so, like, i feel no need to represent their language accurately] about the whole post-death experience) NØRB: Very good, very good. We'll get through this yet. Baby steps, my man, baby steps. So, were you keeping up with the rock world at all after you left



the squared circle? Do you like Nashville Pussy? You must like Nashville Pussy!

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BAD

NØRB: "Bad" as in "bad-ass," or "bad" as in "no good?"

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREET

NØRB: Oh jeezus...this is the worst fucking interview with a dead person i've ever conducted. Look, i got a column due in two hours, work with me on this, i hafta turn in something or i'll suffer a crushing loss of status among the "hip folk." (ponders his next course of action for a while) Uh...okay, i think i got it. So, Terry, where did the Milwaukee Braves move to after the 1965 season?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: ATLANTA GEE-AY!!!

NØRB: Oh yes, very insightful, you're doing great. Uhhh...remember that Texas Death Match you had with Kerry Von Erich in Dallas for World Class Championship Wrestling? Where you guys beat each other to bloody pulps, and the ring was all stained for the later matches? That's actually one of the greatest, if not THE greatest, matches i've ever seen. You guys beat on each other for the whole hour-long TV show! That wasn't merely BAD, it wasn't merely BADDER, it was...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADDEST

NØRB: Yeah! Yeah! Exactly! Say, Terry, i know you and your bandmates had pronounced proclivities towards Southern Rock, but have you ever listened to the MC5? What was that song they had on their second album? "Shakin'" something or another...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREET

NØRB: Why, yes! This is a side of Terry "Bam Bam" Gordy we never knew before! You're coming off as a very hip and with-it sort of character! Our readership respect you as a knowledgeable music fan now, not just another three-hundred pound redneck with a bad Def Leppard perm! Back on the mortal plane, your publicist breathes a sigh of relief! Gimme five! On the side!

HIT SQUAD

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: IN THE WHOLE

NØRB: You got soul! What was that second MC5 album called, anyway? “Back In The...” oh, drat, i can’t remember...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: USA!

NØRB: Ah, but of course! By far their most shining hour! “Kick Out The Jams” has got its moments, of course, but, as far as i’m concerned, “High,” with the exception of the one good song, is an utter piece of shit!!!

(upon hearing this pronunciation of “High”’s musical neo-worthlessness, Terry “Bam Bam” Gordy flies into a rage, beating the interviewer’s ass from pillar to post. A vicious Oriental Spiking is avoided only when the interviewer cunningly surrenders the home-made wrestling belt he made utilizing a large leather strap, a few spare Chevrons of Love, a hot glue gun and a gold vinyl Boris The Sprinkler/Moral Crux split seven-inch)

NØRB: Fuck this, man, no more music questions! I can't take this pounding like i used to. I ain't a young man any more, Terry. I'm 36 fucking years old. Of course, in Base Twelve, i'd only be 30. You know, "three dozens, no units." You like Base Twelve, man?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BAD

NØRB: No way, Base Twelve is cool! We should switch. We only have a Base Ten system because we were born with ten fingers, and that's how mankind learned how to count. How would you know, anyway? Where did YOU learn about Base Twelve mathematics?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREET

NØRB: Really! I had no idea the concept of Base Twelve was so street-level. I always thought it was the province of effete twerps. Hey, you know that pitcher for the Marlins? Antonio Alfonseca? Dude's got six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot!

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: ATLANTA GEE-AY?

NØRB: No, man, the Marlins are from Florida, where you guys used to hold the 6-man tag belts. The Braves are from Atlanta. You're confusing your NL East teams. Anyway, i was at a Brewers game last week, i was hanging out by the visitors' bullpen watching Alfonseca warmup, and i totally forgot to look at the dude's fingers! I was this close to a known polydactylic, and i forgot to look! I could kick myself! I felt bad...shit, worse than bad...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADDEST

NØRB: You ain't kiddin', bro. I wanted to go lay down in the...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREET

NØRB: Yeah, exactly. Anyway, about Base Twelve, Base Twelve would be fucking cool. I mean, you know, now we have Base Ten, where the numeral “10” means one ten and zero ones, right? The right-most column shows single units, and the next column to the left is the number of tens. So, as i’m sure you know, in Base Twelve, the numeral “10” means one DOZEN and zero ones; the right-most column is the same, but the one to the left of it now stands for the number of twelves, not the number of tens. So “10” means “twelve.” Carrying that one step further, the third-column over in Base Twelve would be grosses, not hundreds. You know, twelve-times-twelves instead of ten-times-tens. So the numeral “100” would actually mean

what “144” means right now. One gross. And, quite frankly, with that perm dripping sweat on your mammoth body, you seem to be One Gross guy. Are you with me on this — Base Twelve or Bust? Are you out or are you in?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: IN

NØRB: I mean, fuck, people think that ten is some magical number, and it isn't. You can have whatever number you want be your base, i think, and the little "to multiply by 10, just add a zero" thing will work. I mean, the only thing Base Ten is really good for is scoring bowling games, y'know? Base Twelve would be much cooler. We have twelve months in a year, beer comes in twelve packs, eggs come by the dozen, "Back In The USA" was only released on twelve-inch vinyl — it's just a more practical and efficient number. I mean, think about it — with the decimal system, an LP spins at thirty-three-and-a-third rotations per minute. Now, write that out numerically, Terry.

It's "33.33333333333333333333333333"

333
333.
..” with the 3’s repeating FOREVER! And it’s STILL NOT EXACTLY RIGHT! Whereas, with the duodecimal system that Base Twelve would provide, it would be written 29.4 RPM — two dozens plus nine units plus four twelfths. Quick and easy, my man. I mean, sure “ $33\frac{1}{3}$ ” is cool in its own sort of mystical fashion, but — gawd-DAMN, Bam Bam! — our whole planet suffers under the uneasy yoke of knowing that it would take our ENTIRE LIFETIME to write out the decimal fraction that indicates how many RPM the first Generation X album spins at, and we STILL would have an infinite number of 3’s to go! I mean, not to put too fine a point on it, but fuck the decimal system! Long live the the duodecimal system! We shan’t stop until we’ve converted our archaic and outmoded Base Ten system to Base Twelve, from coast to coast and border to border!

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: THE WHOLE USA!!!

NØRB: Damn straight, my humongous long-haired red-neck ass-kicking friend! Of course, if “10” means twelve, we hafta kinda find new symbols to represent ten and eleven, because, remember, not only does “10” mean “twelve” in our glorious new world order (uh, not to be confused with that other “N.W.O.”) — but “11” now means “thirteen” as well. I propose that we use “?” for ten, and “!” for eleven. So, if we were counting from one to twelve — that is, of course, “1 to 10” in Base Twelve — we’d say it “one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve” but we’d write it “1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, ?, !, 10.” What do you think?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BAD

NØRB: Yeah, i know the math and science community will never go for “?” for ten and “!” for eleven because they actually use those symbols for other operations; i figure if we throw them a bone, and let them choose their own new symbols for ten and eleven, then they’ll think that THEY are calling the shots, and that THEY are bossing us around, instead of the other way ‘round, and they’ll institute our system and smile while they do it. Pretty smart, huh?

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREET

NØRB: Yeah, i got more street smarts than i give myself credit for sometimes! Plus, i mean, if we go to Base Twelve, we can eliminate the star key and the pound key in our lifetime, and

maybe we won't have to be switching area codes every two years like virtually every populated region of the US does...

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: ATLANTA GEE-AY!

NØRB: Exactly. Of course, every number after twelve would wind up getting more or less completely overhauled — i mean, if you're going to do a job, do it right, ya know? I think all the numbers after twelve are gonna get overhauled — so i think that the numerals 11-20 — 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 1?, 1! and 20, which correspond with the old, base ten bullshit numerals 13 thru 24 — should be called oneteen, twoteen, threeteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, tenteen, eleventeen and twoty. I mean, it'll be a little weird, on accounta the word "fourteen" will mean what "sixteen" currently means, but, by that same token, 16 would be legal. So, i mean, if you ever got caught doing something, you could be like "geez, your honor, she told me she was base TWELVE sixteen, not base TEN!"

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BADDEST!

NØRB: And, of course, things would proceed as one would logically surmise: "21" would be called "twoty-one" and would be equal to today's Base Ten 25, etc.; 2? is called "twoty-ten" and is equivalent to the old 34; 2! is called "twoty-eleven" and is worth 35 of today's counting units, you get the picture. The number ?0 would, obviously, be called "tenty" — and, of course, mean "ten dozen" — ergo the teevee show formerly known as "120 Minutes" would be re-titled as "?0 Minutes" in the unlikely chance that it

REVNØRB

would even make it through our glorious Stalinist purges alive, while the number !0 is similarly obviously referred to as "eleventy."

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: STREEEEEEET!

NØRB: Uh, i think the expression is "SWEEEEEEET!", but i applaud the sentiment. Now, of course, like we said, "100" means "a dozen dozen" and is worth what the pissants would call "144" today; called, with all appropriate dignity, a "gross" — the word "hundred" shall be, with the exception of the bowling alley — excised from every math text in the nation!

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: IN THE WHOLE USA!

NØRB: You got it, Mister Bam! Of course, Generation X will have to retitle their song "84 Punks Rule," but that's no skin off my Base Twelve ass. Of course, that big "33" on the back of that album cover will have to be converted to a "29," but, then again, it was a third of an RPM off to begin with, which probably added up to well over a dozen revolutions unaccounted for over the duration of the record.

TERRY "BAM BAM" GORDY: BAD!

NØRB: I am on a bit of a roll, aren't i? Now, stay with me here: The numbers 101, 102, etc., are called "Grossly-one," "Grossly-two," and so forth, up thru the ever-popular Grossly-ten ("10?"), Grossly-eleven ("10!"), and Grossly-

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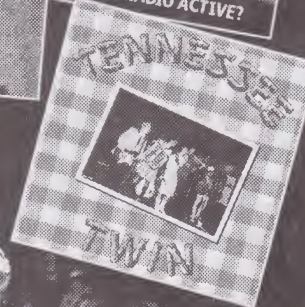
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HIT SQUAD

twelve ("110"). Things progress logically thereafter: Grossly-oneteen ("111"), Grossly-twoteen ("112"), Grossly-thirteen ("113" — the base ten equivalent of "159"), Grossly-tenteen ("11?"), Grossly-eleventeen ("11!"), Grossly-twenty ("120" — now worth 168), etc. Some of the more interesting numbers on the way up to Two Gross ("200" — 288 in base ten) include Grossly-tenty-one ("1?1"), Grossly-tenty-ten ("1??"), Grossly-tenty-eleven ("1?!"), Grossly-eleventy ("!00"), Grossly-eleventy-ten ("!0?"), and, finally, Grossly-eleventy-eleven ("!?! — equal to the obsolete base ten 287). Naturally, Two Gross is followed by Two Grossly-one, Two Grossly-two, etc., onwards and upwards thru the Ten Grosslies ("?00" is Ten Gross, obviously, "?0!" is Ten Grossly-eleven, and the ever-popular "???" is Ten Grossly-tenty-ten — incidentally worth 1570 Base Ten). "?00", or Eleven Gross, follows "?!?", or Ten Grossly-eleventeen-eleven. "?0?" is Eleven Grossly-tenty-ten, "!!8" would be Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eight, "!!?" is Eleven Grossly-eleventy-ten, and the last number before the odometer flips to "1000" is "!!!!", or Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven. The numeral "1000," of course, indicates twelve to the third power — or 1728 in base ten — and is referred to as a "Yuck", not a "Thousand," which will be a word only allowed in reference to salad dressing. The entire cycle thus begins again, with "1001" being spoken as "Yucky-one," "1002" as "Yucky-two," "100?" as "Yucky-ten," and so on. "10???" then signifies Yucky-tenty-ten, "10?!" Yucky-tenty-eleven, "10!?" Yucky-eleventy-ten, "10!!" Yucky-eleventy-eleven, "1100" Yucky-gross, and so forth. "12?!", then, would be "Yucky Two Gross-tenty-eleven", et cetera. Many optically pleasing new numerals are created in the Yuckies, such as "123?" (Yucky Two Grossly-thirty-ten), "123!" (Yucky Two Grossly-thirty-eleven), "1?1?" (Yucky Ten Grossly-tenteen), "1?1!" (Yucky Ten Grossly-eleventeen), "1?2!" (Yucky Ten Grossly-twoty-eleven), "1??0" (Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty), "1??1" (Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-one), "1???" (Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten), "1?!!" (Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-eleven), "1?!" (Yucky Ten Grossly-eleventeen), "1?!?" (Yucky Ten Grossly-eleventy-eleven), and "1!!!!" (Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven), not to be confused with "11!!" — merely Yucky Grossly-eleventy-eleven. "200!" is, of course, Two Yucky-eleven; "20!?" is Two Yucky-eleventy-ten; "2??!" is Two Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-eleven; and "8!!!!" is Eight Yucky Eleven Gross-eleventy-eleven, and comes right before Nine Yuck. Ten Yuck is, obviously, "?000," and is worth 17,280 base ten units, and it is followed by "?001" — Ten Yucky-one, "?002," "?003," and so on, thru the sensual glories of "?00?" (Ten Yucky-ten), the bi-polar mania of "?00!" (Ten Yucky-eleven), the frighteningly irrational overtones of "?0?0" (Ten Yucky-tenty), the existential quagmire that is ?1?7 (Ten Yucky Grossly-tenty-seven) the jack-in-the-box like fury of "???0" (Ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty), the sheer, though not unexpected brilliance of "?????" (Ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten — base ten 18,850), the mammoth might of "???!?" (Ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-eleven), the unsettling imbalance of "?!0?" (Ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-ten), the stern example set by

"?!?0" (Ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy), the neo-Geddy-Lee symbolism of "?!??" (Ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-ten), the preposterous spiritual claims of "?!!!" (Ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven), and the glorious resonance of "!000" (Eleven Yuck). Needless to say, things progress from "!001" (Eleven Yucky-one) through "!00?" (Eleven Yucky-ten), "!00!" (Eleven Yucky-eleven), "!0??" (Eleven Yucky-tenty-ten), "!??0" (Eleven Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty), "!???" (Eleven Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten), "!?!?" (Eleven Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-eleven), up through "!!!!9" (Eleven Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-nine) and "!!!!?" (Eleven Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-ten) and "!!!!!" (Eleven Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven), culminating in "10,000", or Twelve Yuck, equivalent to twelve to the fourth power, or 20,736 in base ten. Needless to say, this yields lots of great numbers like "10,???" (Twelve Yuck Ten Grossly-tenty-ten), "10,!01" (Twelve Yuck Eleven Grossly-one), "10,100" (Twelve Yuck Gross), "11,101" (Oneteen Yuck Grossly-one), "1?,000" (Tenteen Yuck), "??,000" (Tenty-ten Yuck), "??,0???" (Tenty-ten Yuck tenty-ten), "!0,000" (Eleventy Yuck), "!0,!0!" (Eleventy Yuck Eleven Grossly-eleven), "!?,000" (Eleventy-ten Yuck), and the obviously wonderful "!!,!!!!" (Eleventy-eleven Yuck Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven). "100,000", then, is a Gross Yuck — twelve (aka "10") to the fifth power, or 248,832 in the lame decimal system of our unhip forefathers. "200,000" is Two Gross Yuck. "200,200" is Two Gross Yucky Two Gross. "2??,001" is, naturally, Two Gross Yucky Tenty-ten Yucky-one, and, meandering into more esoteric crap, "9??,???" is Nine Gross Yucky Tenty-ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten ("?99,999" is, of course, Ten Gross Yucky Ninety-nine Yucky Nine Grossly-ninety-nine). As I'm sure the world over is dying to know, "???,???" is Ten Gross Yuck Tenty-ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten, "???,!!!" is Ten Gross Yuck Tenty-ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven, "?!,!?" is Ten Gross Yuck Eleventy-ten Yucky Eleven Grossly-tenty-eleven, and "!!!!,!!!" is Eleven Gross Yuck Eleventy-eleven Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven, which is 1 less than "1,000,000", which is twelve to the sixth power, worth 2,985,984 in base ten, and would be referred to by mathematicians as a "Yuckity-Yuck." Who wants to be a Yuckity-Yuckaire? "1,001,000" is then, of course, Yuckity-Yuck Yuck, while "1,001,100" is Yuckity-Yuck Yuck Gross. "1,200,100" is Yuckity-Yuck Two Gross Yuck Gross, while "1,201,200" is Yuckity-Yuck Two Gross Yuck Yucky Two Gross. One tends to suspect that, by now, the benefits of this system should be patently obvious, but, continuing on, "?,000,000" is Ten Yuckity-Yuck. Adding one to "?,???,???" (Ten Yuckity-Yuck Ten Gross Yuck Tenty-ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-ten), we get "?,???,?!", or Ten Yuckity-Yuck Ten Gross Yuck Tenty-ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-eleven. "!0,0!0,0!" is Eleven Yuckity-Yuck Eleventy Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleven, and "!0,!!0,!!!" is, of course, Eleven Yuckity-Yuck Eleven Gross Yuck Eleventy-eleven Yucky Eleven Grossly-eleventy-eleven. "10,000,000" is merely Twelve Yuckity-Yuck. It is worth twelve to the seventh power, or 35,831,838 in the woebegone decimal system. "?0,?0?0,0?" is obviously Tenty Yuckity-Yuck Ten Gross Yuck Ten Yucky-tenty, "??,???,??5" is Tenty-ten Yuckity-Yuck Ten Gross Yuck Tenty-ten Yucky Ten Grossly-tenty-five, "!0,000,00!" is Eleventy Yuckity-Yuck-eleven, and the ever-in-demand "!!0,!!0,!!!" is Eleventy-Eleven Yuckity-Yuck

Benedictine monks whom, should this maddening mathematical pace continue, are certain to run out of question marks and exclamation points ere long. Twelve to the 12th power is Twelve Schlutzka, written "10,000,000,000" and worth 61,917,364,224 base ten style points. Twelve to the 13th power is "100,000,000,000", or a Gross Schlutzka (743,008,370,688 in the dark ages). After that, things generally proceed along the same general parameters of the old regime: Every three zeroes equals a new prefix. Thusly, 1,000,000,000,000 becomes a Bilutchka (10,000,000,000,000 merely Twelve Bilutchka; 100,000,000,000,000 a Gross Bilutchka, etc.), 1,000,000,000,000,000 a Trilutchka, and so on and so forth through the Quadrutchka, the Quintutchka, the red-hot Sextutchka, the Septutchka, the Octutchka, the militantly chaste Nontutchka, the Dekutchka, the crisp and clear

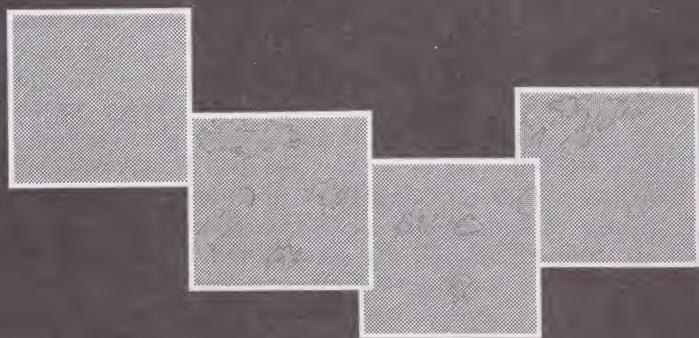
(Terry "Bam Bam" Gordy whips Stiv's ass until i run out of tape, effectively ending the interview) ⊕

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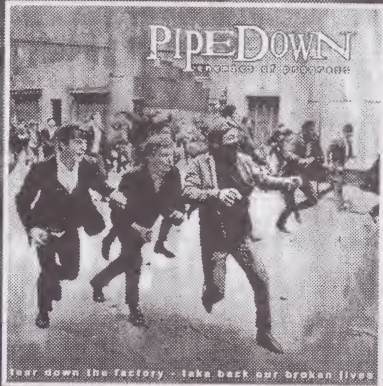
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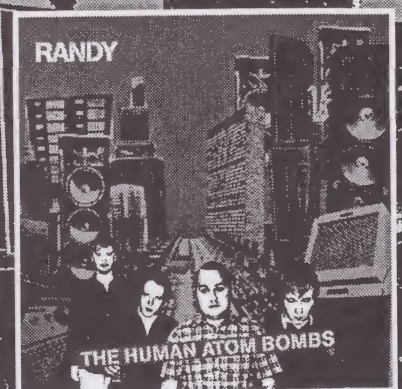
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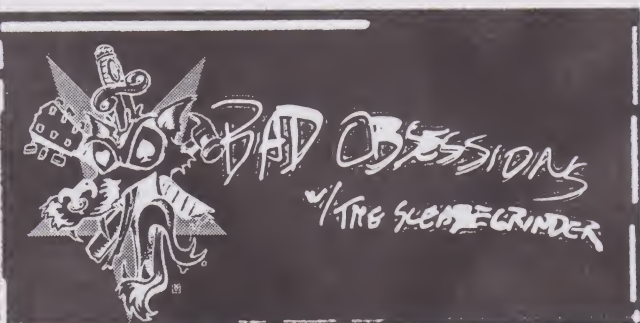
HIT SQUAD

IT'S SO EASY

"I don't pray in churches, baby" — Iggy Pop

"Rock and Roll tried to ruin my life." — Supagroup

It all started because Tim Catz wanted to bang Sticky. Tim is the former Roadsaw magnate who recently emigrated to Los Angeles to become Tinseltown's latest Bukowski in training. But at the time, he was just another sleazy rock journalist



thinking with his dick. We were sitting around the *Weekly Dig* offices, pitching story ideas, when he came up with the notion that we ought to write up some features on local rock artists. He would, of course, take on Sticky, the statuesque, raven-haired rock goddess that supplies lucky Boston bands with hallucinatory sex monster gig posters. Going with the ruse, I volunteered to interview Ian Adams, Rock City Crimewave's psychotronic front fiend and noted flyer and t-shirt man. The interview was conducted with typical smarm:

"Well, we were all in the same church group, it was a beautiful thing. See, my dad, he started the first snake handler church in Massachusetts. He got bit by a copperhead snake in the backyard while gardening..."

So, your dad is a snake handler?

"No, my dad is a Presbyterian minister. But I was in this bar once, and I was really loaded, and I started the snake handler myth, and I went into detail about, like, the folding chairs, and I was going on and on, and I couldn't let myself off the hook, and it was Rob from Quintaine Americana's girlfriend, and..."

At some point, we eventually got around to discussing the inspiration for his rather cryptic art.

Hey, my editor said not to mention the Masons.

"OK."

Well, why did he say that?

"Because whenever we're at a party together, Joe and I get to talking about how, when I was young, I visited a Masonic temple. My dad was a grand knight in the Knights of Columbus and he took us to an Ecumenical pancake breakfast one morning. My sister and I were bored, so we snuck into the temple. There were things that I saw there that related to events that transpired later in my life. And I don't think he can handle it."

Wild. Does Masonic imagery crop up in your artwork?

"Absolutely. The Rock City Crimewave logo is a good example. It's pretty much all Masonic symbolism. The skull and crossbones is from the Knights Templar, and in a lot of Masonic rites the skull is there to represent secrecy, but also in a deeper sense, it symbolizes rebirth. So it comes from this encoded myth, where one of the Knights Templar supposedly had sex with a corpse, and came back to the body to find the head of a baby between the crossbones of the legs. And it's supposed to represent some ancient cult's belief in resurrection..."

That's deeper than I thought, man. I figured you just jammed as many tattoo clichés as possible in one logo.

"Well, the whole thing is structured like that. Even the angles of the thing are symbolic. It's Hermetic, in fact."

Is any of it so secret you can't even talk about it?

"Yes. I'm letting all this stuff out slowly, so that I don't blow too many minds at once."

I slapped a pseudo-provocative title on the thing ("Fuck Art, Let's Fuck: Ian Adams on the Aesthetics of Lesbians with Machine Guns"), and everybody was happy. Until the week after the piece ran, when the following letter to the editor appeared in the next issue:

"To those parties affiliated:

I have been reading your publication for some time now and I find it quite enjoyable. However, I have noticed a trend in, shall we say, "esoteric hearsay." In this week's issue, the article "Fuck art, Let's fuck" caught and held my undivided attention. Clever title aside, "Sleazegrinder" and Joe of the *Weekly Dig*, and artist musician Ian Adams should be forewarned. There will be — and always have been — those that oppose your views and will try to silence you.

The organizations of which you speak, Mr Adams, go far deeper than even you may realize, regardless of your father's involvement. I am pleased to note that you are knowledgeable when it comes to this particular subject matter. Well informed, you are not. The Grand Order of Masons, the Knights Templar, the Knights of Columbus and any other ancient society of this nature may not appreciate you speaking freely in regards to insider information. Perhaps when Joe told "Sleazegrinder" not to mention the Masons, the interviewer should not have pressed the topic. The question was even raised as to whether some of this information was "so secret you can't even talk about it." Perhaps, Mr Adams, you should have stated your assent to this idea much sooner during the interview and left your audience to wonder in ignorance.

I am aware of at least two members of the *Weekly Dig* staff being involved with said organizations. Being something of a researcher, I know their status, their affiliations, and even their particular areas of expertise. However, I am one of impeccable decorum and will not reveal any connections or identities here in this correspondence. Nor will this information ever be used for malevolent purposes. Nevertheless, because of these particular affiliations, I find it necessary to suggest that no further mention be made of this topic. My Organization does not mind the offhand arcane reference, but we would greatly appreciate the same level of decorum from

you that we have shown those on your staff involved with us.

Please understand that this letter is in no way to be taken as a threat to yourself or anyone affiliated with your publication. One of your staff, actually, has proven themselves highly valuable to our efforts. Because of this, I am writing merely to caution you with the age-old adage: "Loose lips sink ships."

Respectfully yours in esoteric pursuits, Illiel"

A couple of days later I'm at work, when I spot my arch nemesis Norm. I won't get into the specifics of why I don't like the guy; let's just say that he's a jackass on many levels. He also happens to be 33rd degree Mason. He's not nearly hip enough to read the *Dig*, so I knew it wasn't him that actually wrote the letter, but it was, after all, one of his people. So I harassed him about it. Two weeks before, Norm and I were standing in the middle of a Mercedes dealership parking lot, waiting for a ride. It was so hot, the asphalt was bubbling at our feet. To distract myself from the nagging thought that I was going to die from heat exhaustion waiting for the stupid van, I started up a conversation with him, with typically disastrous results. I was talking about how the Masons had killed Kennedy, a half-baked theory I picked up from the book *Apocalypse Culture* when I was a teenager. That's when he casually mentioned that not only was he in the brotherhood, he was, in fact, a grand poobah. Which did nothing to bond us. So here I was, with this weird pseudo-threat hanging over my head, when I confronted him. "Hey motherfucker, you better call off your dogs in that secret society of yours." He claimed to not know what I was talking about, so I showed him the letter. "Listen", he says, "In any group of people there's going to be renegades, people that go against the established order. I don't know who this guy Illiel is, but I wouldn't worry about it." "So", I say, "the Masons don't really have any interest in me?" He smirks. "Oh, I wouldn't say that." The next day, Norm hands me an email that he'd gotten that read, in part, "Subject 18999435, Ken McIntyre, observed on Saturday, 7.14 at 5:20 p.m. on Mass. Avenue in Cambridge, accompanied by unidentified blonde female, approx. 5'9". Step up observation on female subject?" I laughed it off. I mean, I'm easy to find, after all. Norm laughed too, saying it was some greasy joke, but who really knows how far the tendrils of the Masonic conspiratorial octopus stretch? Meanwhile, Ian was conducting his own spin control, and the next week, his rebuttal was printed in the *Dig*:

"In response to the letter that appeared in your last issue [the strange potentially veiled threat potentially from a Mason or member of another secret order]:

Dude,

Any of the Masonic, Hermetic, or otherwise esoteric beans I may have spilled can easily be found in your local library. Please try to remember the purpose of the brotherhood is to enlighten, not to threaten outsiders. That's precisely why organizations like the AFAM, AMORC, Templars, etc., get so much heat. As a matter of fact, years ago, the worshipful master of the Tri-town temple suggested that I start my journey with the book *Born in Blood*, I think it's a good one for anyone interested to start with. Above and beyond that, chill out.

Love, Ian Adams, Grand Archetuthys, CC "

So far, no black cloaked assassins have dragged either Ian or

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myself into the nearest alley to silence our cult busting derring-do forever, but the night is young. I only hope that with all our efforts, Tim scored with the chick in the leather pants, and that it was delicious.

(text used with permission, I'm assuming, from Boston's *Weekly Dig*. Occultists looking for somebody to threaten, check out www.weeklydig.com)

THE PERILS OF ROCK AND ROLL DECADENCE



I just found out that at our July show, there was this couple standing directly in front of me, and while we were playing, this dude was totally fingering this chick! Here I was singing to them, thinking they were really enjoying the show. I guess they were in their own way... — Karen Neal, Queen Bee

Date: Friday, August 24th @ The Rainbow Inn in Hazel Park (Detroit area) — we played with a band called Killswitch. At the last minute we find out the opening band broke up so they won't be showing up.

Well, the singer (Eric Dahlstrom) in my other band (Negative Conductor) happened to be there to see the show as well as the singer for my old band (Bryan Adams, believe it or not). So we just throw a band (we called it The Nuges) together on the spot with Eric on guitar, Paul on bass, me on drums and Bryan

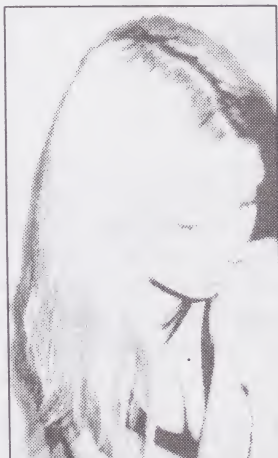


singing. This is a smallish bar (I think they used to be a divey sports bar that went under) with a fairly small stage, a pretty sucky PA and, oh yeah, we found out when we got there we had to

work the door (which I didn't mind 'cause that meant the bands actually got all the money) and do the sound ourselves. Well, another couple of friends at the show helped out and did the door and sound. The PA was a little six channel mixer on the side of the stage running out to two fairly large speakers sitting on stands on either side of the stage right out front. We (The Nuges) started playing to open the show. The guitar is so loud that 5 minutes into the set it blows one of the PA speakers (sitting right in front of the guitar amp) about 5 feet through the air...luckily there was no one near by or they would have been killed. The speaker comes crashing to the ground to the ecstatic cheers of the crowd but, to be honest, we were so fucked up we really didn't notice until the first song was over and we heard the guy that was doing sound freaking out "DUDE, DUDE, TURN IT DOWN, TURN IT DOWN!" We only played for about 15 minutes then Killswitch went on and finally the DragStrippers. The crowd was

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electrified for the rest of the night and they even ventured up near the stage eventually. It was a great show. But even after the DragStrippers played people were still saying "Man, I've never seen anyone rock so hard they (Nuges) blew the PA speaker off the stand! That was the shit!" — Gram Larceny, the Dragstrippers



I was playing an all ages show and things were going wild, I was down on my knees, bashing my head into the floor when something cut open the top of my head. Blood starts gushing down my face, I thought, 'wow! This is cool!' Then I got really dizzy, managed to finish the whole show and asked my fill-in guitar player to drive me to the hospital, by this point I was completely covered in blood, dizzy, and barely able to speak. The guitar player in question was a temp, he was an acquaintance who played awesome so he filled in and did the show. Being that I'm a pretty "hot chick", he total-

ly hit on me all the time at practice and I was really sick of it and even told him to go fuck off a couple times and he still kept doing it. So, we are in the car, I am profusely pouring blood by now and all the way to the hospital he is saying, "I really like you Charlie", "we should be together...etc." He is going on and on and on and I am laying back thinking, "What the fuck? I am *dying* here! This guy is fucked in the head!" So, I say to him, "I don't want to go to the hospital anymore, take me back to the show." So we drive back...I get out and get over to where my band is tearing down. They are all shocked that I am back. So, I decide to take advantage of my condition and get some sympathy and some jerk's ass kicked at the same time. I say this: "I wanted to go, but all he could do was hit on me and say all this crap when I am dying here!" That was enough; they all started yelling at him, and a couple seconds later his guitar was thrown at him and they kicked his ass out of the hall. I did eventually end up at the hospital that night and I never saw that loser guitar player again.

— Charlie Drown (www.charliedrown.com)

So, it was Crash and Burn's first tour. We went out with Weedeater for a couple of weeks down south. We were on our way back up the coast when it happened. We were in South Carolina and Jef had to use the can so we stopped at a gas station in some pissant backwoods town. The floor of the van was pretty hot but we hadn't had any major trouble with it. So we pull into this gas station, Jef gets out and goes to the can, Phil and Matt (our roadie) go into the mini mart, and Bombo (our old drummer) and I stay outside. Bombo had just started pumping the gas when he said "is that smoke coming from the front of the van"? Sure enough there was smoke rising out of the hood, so I had him pop the hood and there was a huge ball of flame underneath the engine (which would be pretty crazy anyway, not to mention the fact that we were pumping gas right then, and this town consisted of a couple of gas stations and fireworks places, so if we blew up we would've wiped the whole fuckin place off the map —

we could've been on CNN as the band that destroyed a town). So Bombo and I run into the gas station and yell that our van is on fire and we need a fire extinguisher. The attendant lazily waddles over and says, "Here she is, you boys know how to use it?" He didn't seem to realize that we didn't exactly have time for talking, so Bombo ripped it out of his hands and ran outside and put the motherfucker out. We then pushed it into the parking lot, pulled apart the front and realized that it was completely charred. We called a tow truck and they dropped us off at South of the Border (it's like hillbilly Disneyland) because that was the only motel even remotely close. We got a room, stocked up on as much hooch as we could afford (I believe it was two cases of some crappy ice beer, a couple of bottles of Mad Dog, and a bottle of Thunderbird) and proceeded to wreck the place. We did flips from the dresser onto the bed (Bombo was doing back flips by the time both beds were broken), and just all around took out our frustrations on the room. We even found some weed in the room, which was pretty cool. Then next day we sat around shitty small town no.2 while our van was being worked on and ate fried everything because folks down south love to fry everything. After kicking around all day our shit was finally fixed (fixed enough to get us home anyway) and we drove back home after missing our few last shows and way in debt.

— Bill, Crash n'Burn (www.crashandburn1.com)

We played in Minneapolis earlier this year, at some bar called the High Society Music Bar or something. It was an all-ages club with a bar. We were drinking and happy. The place smelled like body odor and band-aids. There was a huge amount of nerdy



indie rock kids there to see this band called the Frenchies or something...some skinny dork wanted to interview us before the show for his little 'zine. We told him to ask us after the show when we were good and drunk. He was pushy and relentless, but agreed to leave us alone until then. This was the first show with our new bassist, Nigel. Nigel and our roadie Velcro Lewis are very protective of us. They usually don't let anyone talk to us before we play, cuz Strapbone and Boom Boom

have a horrible problem with being sluts and have missed our sound check too many times because they were making out with some punk rock throw-backs, and I also hate people, so it works out fine. Well, Velcro and Nigel were off doing something stupid and trying to impress the local girls with their heavy metal cassette distro while we were getting ready to get made up and look pretty. That one dork with the 'zine asked us once more if we were ready for the interview. I said "NO! Get lost or I'll break your glasses!", and he ran away. We gathered our caboodle and wardrobe and strutted off to the ladies room to change. We were in there forever, dolling ourselves up, getting naked, checking out each other's tits and tan lines, when Strapbone asks, "You guys hear some kinda clicky-clack?" "A what?" "A clicky-clack", she repeats. "We told you NOT to do whippets before a show ever again!" I scream at her. "No. It sounds like a camera...whatever, I hear that sound all the time, if you know what I mean..." She says. "Um, sure you do..." Just then, there was a flash. Someone

was taking perv pictures of us without the usual written consent! With my corset half on and Strapbone in just her skibbies, we kick open the stall door. It was the interviewer dork snapping pictures of his wet dreams! Boom Boom jumps in and grabs his camera and runs out of the bathroom. Strapbone and I push him into the open toilet. He couldn't get away. I cracked my knuckles. Boom Boom comes back in with Velcro and Nigel. She picks the kid outta the toilet, throws him against the sink. He doesn't even cry, shout, or try to get away. Boom Boom hands the camera to Nigel and Velcro holds the kid in a half-nelson. Boom Boom punches him in the gut while Nigel takes a picture. Then Strapbone takes a shot at him, right in the face. Nigel snaps another shot. Then I punched him in the nuts. "OWWWWIE!", another great photo opportunity! We took about six more pictures until the film ran out. We made him cry. That's what happens, after all, when a boy gets punched in the balls. We left him with the film, as a reminder that he got beat up by some girls...anyway the show went good and we got paid \$15! — Jenna Talia, Apocalypstick (www.mp3.com/apocalypstick)

It was a Tuesday, sometime last July. Hot, hot, hot. Onstage, headlining at Sheffield's Casbah club. Last song, "Sneak Preview," singer Denis jumping a round, knocking things over, falling down, causing trouble. Christoff the bass man swings his bass tool around like a crazy man, and "SMASH!", Christoffs' bass machine head and Denis's ear collide. Blood everywhere. Denis's 1986 Maradonna yellow soccer shirt now red, ear lobe and other bits writhing on the stage floor. Sir Dickus Mintus, other singer, picks lobe up, hands it back to Denis, who is laugh-

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(<http://www.pmella.freemove.co.uk/sheffieldbands/lessthanzero.htm>)

ing and bleeding. Crowd thinks it's part of the show, as nobody really knows what will happen next at a gig. Doctors stitch lobe back on, plastic surgery is rumored. National coverage in UK. NME runs story, local papers run story and pictures, infamy complete. For our next trick, we will set ourselves on fire, live on CNN. — Al Machine, Less Than Zero

SUGAR IN THE GASTANK: THE DOLLYROTS STORY

"Gosh, I don't get that many free drinks. I think people think that I'm too young to drink, so they don't offer, because they think they'll get in trouble."

Combine girl-group harmonies, a buzzing Johnny Thunders guitar and the sugary chirp of Letters To Cleo, and you've got a heady sonic cocktail indeed, albeit the pink and fuzzy kind that's



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so sweet you don't realize how rubber-leg drunk it's making you until you wake up in another state, badly tattooed and married to a stripper. And like any good mood-altering substance, it's even better in constant, ever-increasing doses. That's what the Dollyrots are like. Before being graced with their demo, if you would have told me that one of my favorite records out of the half a billion or so I've heard this year would come from a bunch of barely legal kids in Florida who call their music "bubblegum



punk" and feature a singer who performs in a poodle skirt, well, I would have told you to lay off the fucking absinthe, Jack. But that's the beauty of rock and roll, you never know what's going to happen next, or who's going to make it happen. The Dollyrots are not just a band, they are an anti-venom, the new pop narcotic, a cure for all the gut-spilling and hand-wringing getting passed off as rock music these days. Somebody call Allan Freed, and tell Chuck Berry, or maybe Buck Cherry the news, because we've got an authentic sensation on our hands.

Having only formed a scant four months ago, they've already managed to bring their hometown of Sarasota, Florida to its knees with their insanely upbeat brand of cotton candy pop-punk. And while that may not seem like the biggest accomplishment a band can muster, there's dozens of bands in central Florida that have been slugging it out in local dives for years, and none of them are in *Hit List*, are they? I actually already have a 21-year old baby sister, but I'm officially adopting Kelly Dollyrots as well. She's like a curly haired Mary Tyler Moore, the Dick Van Dyke version with the Capri pants and an endearing habit of starting her sentences with the word "Gosh". She's like evil turned inside out, this one. "There's a broad range of people that come out to see us. For some reason or another, we have a large gay following. I don't know why, it perplexes us. Maybe they think Luis and Frank are cute. And we always have a couple of old biker men that come up to us after the show and say, 'You guys rock!' Everybody in between too, like preppy kids, and then serious rockers, too. We've had a lot of people say 'Gosh, I came to your show, and I was in a really bad mood, I was feeling really lame, but when I left, I was just smiling so big!'" Kelly's calling from the Dollyrots farm on a Saturday afternoon in late

August. Brimming with enthusiasm, she's talking about the effect her band has on its audience. "That's really all what we want to do. If it goes any further than that, great. But I mean, we don't want to be any kind of 'Beaver Cleaver' positive influence or anything horrible like that, but we'd at least like to show people that there can be normal kids that can function somewhat happily." The fact that such a simple concept seems rare, almost antiquated in these times of desperate youthful aggression is further proof that the Dollyrots couldn't have shown up at a better time. What the world needs now...is bubblegum punk.

SHE CAN TURN THE WORLD ON WITH HER SQUEAK

In her trademark soft-spoken chirp, Kelly explains the origins of the band. "Frank, our drummer, was in a band called Prophecy, which was totally self-indulgent metal." She laughs. "Luis (guitar) and I were both in a band called No Chef, and it was pretty horrific. The name was even terrible. We found a tape of it, and it was only a year ago, but we listened to a tape of one of our practices, and it was so bad. It was similar music to what we do now, really, but we just didn't take it very seriously. Not that our music is all that serious now. But in that band, the bass player wanted to be the star of the show, so I only got to sing two songs." Kelly's voice is the star of the Dollyrots show, that much is certain. With roots firmly planted in 60's pop and 50's rock and roll, her vocals are like some cartoon version of a mini-skirted Motown wailer. Or Joey Ramone on helium and ecstasy, maybe. But a year ago, she didn't even know she could sing. "I didn't plan on singing at all, but then, one day the guys were going, 'Try singing this song for me', so I was like, 'Alright, but you have to leave the room.' So I sat there by myself, and recorded it on a four track. And when they heard it, they were like, 'Oh! You should sing in the band!' So I said, 'OK'. It took a little while for me to get used to it, but I like it now, it's fun." Her signature upper-register squeal, it turns out, was born, not made. "In 4th grade, I was in chorus for a year, but I wasn't any good. Even now, I mean, I tried going to a vocal coach, but I only went twice. He wanted me to sing church music, it was crazy. He was a really nice guy, but he was teaching me 'Danny Boy'. I was trying really hard, but I just can't sing that way. Before shows, I'm always going, 'I hope you like high-pitched noises! If you don't, you're in trouble!'" Minnie Mouse went punk, and they named her Kelly. And her band? For some weird-assed reason, they called it the Dollyrots. "You want the definition? That's the easiest way. The Dollyrots is a disease that affects kids, and the symptoms are apathy, irritable bowels, corporate taste in clothing, and pierced nipples." So, is the band the ailment, or the cure? "I don't know, it's just a way to describe what's going on, you know, pop culture and all that. It's a fun name."

Most new bands start their live careers on tiny stages on off-nights, playing for the bartender and the crickets. The Dollyrots took a different route. "Our first show was in front of 200 people, and we were petrified," Kelly admits. We were headlining, because we put the show together. It was the graduation for this liberal arts college, a no-grades, hippy kind of place. It was fun, people liked it. That was one of the times that people moshed at one of our shows, but it wasn't really angry moshing. People were just kind of laughing and running into each other. That's typically the response we get. People like to bounce really fast, and then they bounce too fast, and their bodies get all confused,

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so it looks like moshing, but it's really not." Moshing. Florida. They go together like sharks and drunken surfers. "We haven't played a single show with anybody that's remotely like us. There's one other band that's sort of bubblegum punk around here, they're called Anti-Anti, but they're all boys. We're pretty much alone out here." Alone with 10,000 sweaty headbangers. "You haven't seen mullets until you've come to Florida. We get mullets at every one of our shows." She laughs. "We've played many, many metal shows. For some reason, the club owners around here always think that'd we'd do well with metal bands. So we play with bands like Sledge Wound and Struggle, all these nu-metal kids." Surprisingly, these odd couplings have gone over reasonably well. "Usually their fans are pretty receptive, so that's cool. Frank, our drummer, he's like an old school metal guy, so it's important to him, I think, for them to be accepting. Those shows are always interesting. The metal guys always want to do that thing, where we swap records with the other bands, so I have this huge collection of screaming, angry boy...things." When I ask her why central Florida breeds new jack metal like the swamplands breed mosquitoes, she offers up an explanation. "I just think the kids are bored as hell, there's not a lot of fun things to do around here. But I don't know if it's just in Florida, the kids just all seem really mad, it's kind of scary. Maybe they want something to be angry about, but they just don't have anything", she guesses, "so all they've got is 'Mommy didn't buy me those big baggy pants I wanted!' and they scream about that." Given the musical climate of their surroundings, the Dollyrots have tried their best to assimilate. "We do different covers when we play with metal bands. We do 'Breaking the Law', and we do 'You Shook Me All Night Long', she says. "It's fun. The lead singer of AC/DC showed up at our last show for like, half a set. He lives in Sarasota, and we'd been trying to get him to hear about us without being too blatant, and I guess he did. I didn't know he was there, so we didn't play 'Shook Me', I was so pissed off. I don't know if he liked us or not, but people said he was smiling." With grizzled Scottish boogie metal stars on their side, fame can't be too far away. "People recognize me on the street, and it's pretty sick", she laughs. "It's fun though, I could definitely get used to it. I'm looking forward to seeing what the rest of the world thinks of us."

WE CAN'T STAY HERE BABY, THIS IS NOWHERE

"Oh, gosh." Kelly sounds exasperated when I ask her about the cultural landscape in her home state. "It's probably easier to be hip in Florida", she says. "At least, it's easier to *think* you're hip. We're probably five years behind the major cities. I mean, the poor Midwest, they're ten years behind, so I guess it's not that bad. But in Florida, I think it's too easy to be cool, because maybe you're deluding yourself or something. But we're thinking of moving out west, anyway." It was inevitable, I suppose. The Dollyrots go Hollywood. "We're thinking about Santa Monica." I try to impress on Kelly that all things rock actually happen on the East Coast, but she's not buying it. "I don't think I could take the climate up north", she says. "I was born in Jersey, and I hate going up there." I ask her how long she suffered in the Garden state. "Six weeks! My family moved right after I was born. We have a lot of family there, so I usually spend my summers up there, and it's always gray and depressing. I like palm trees and pink flamingos." I remind her that a move to a new city means

that the band would have to start from scratch, but she's not worried. "We don't mind. Next month, we're playing the State Theater. That's in St Petersburg, it's this really big place, it's kind of a big deal. If you play there a couple of times, and you get a decent crowd, then it's time to move on, because there really isn't anyplace left to go around here. We've been here for four months now, and I just think that if we stay any longer, we'd just be wasting time. I figure we ought to move while we can. I really need to see what another music scene is like, because I don't know, things around here just don't seem quite right." Of course, there are many, many bands that would be content to slog it out in the trenches of hometown heroism for four years, never mind that many months, without looking to stake out bigger territory, but pointless obscurity is just not part of the Dollyrots plan. They've got bigger ideas. "Oh, we're in it for world domination, at the very least", Kelly tells me, with confidence.

BETSEY JOHNSON APPRECIATION SOCIETY

"There's definitely a Dollyrots 'look'. I don't know why, but Frank and Luis both end up looking kind of effeminate. Maybe that's why we have a gay following," she laughs. "Frank wears lipstick. He likes to wear black, and hot pink. They both like to



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wear fishnets on their arms. Frank's always bare chested, with like, funny pants. His mom makes circus costumes, so we have a lot of stuff to choose from. He'll pick something crazy out of her circus clothes pile. Luis always wears striped socks, like knee high socks. And he has awesome silver boots. They look just like moon boots." I should point out that this doesn't look nearly as ridiculous as it reads. Really. "I just wear, you know, a tank top and boots and a skirt, usually. I have a really cool poodle skirt that I like to wear. Frank's mom made it for me. It's black with a hot pink poodle, and he has the punk dog collar and everything. That's what we're thinking of calling our album, "Pink Punk Poodle". Besides the circus glam fashions, I ask her what else you can expect from a Dollyrots show. "Lots of really fast bouncing. It's a fun show, I love playing live. I think I'm too self-conscious to be standing there all by myself, though," she says, when I ask her if she's thought of leaving the bass behind and just singing. "I like to keep busy on stage, so the bass gives me something to do. I don't really like to stand up there and dance and grind in front of people. There may come a time when I get used to that, but I kind of hope it never comes." We get around to discussing "Motorcycle Boy", my favorite Dollyrots song. Not only does it instantly bring to mind the drink and slink raunch heroics of Sir François and Mr Ratboy's former biker sleaze band of gypsies, but it's also one of the catchiest little numbers I've ever had stuck to the roof of my brain. A cautionary tale, like "Dead Man's Curve", only with the Dollyrots' patented happy ending, it's infectious "Motorcycle Boy, don't race around my heart" chorus is pure pop genius. I ask Kelly if she actually had a motorcycle boy to sing about. "Well, I did, but that's not what the song is about. The song is actually a wedding present for some friends of ours, and it's true to a 't'. Like the boy, he was really sweet, and they met working at this coffee place. They started dating, and he got into this terrible, terrible motorcycle accident, and they he sold his mangled motorcycle for an engagement ring. It's just so cute, isn't it?" Well, I'm the Sleazegrinder, I eat planets, so I don't know from "cute". But I have to admit, it lightens my scowl. "But there's this cute group of motorcycle boys from Chicago that just moved to Sarasota. They come to our shows, and they bring their bikes. It's not about them, but they think it is."



I DON'T MONOTONE IT DOWN

"So far, at least for the past few months, I've gotten to be a Dollyrot 24 hours a day. I don't know how we're pulling it off, except that we drink a lot of Slim Fast, because it's cheap and has a lot of vitamins." Kelly gives me a run down of a typical day in the life of the band. "It's really hot here, so we like to wait for the sun to go down before we get up. Frank lives in the middle of nowhere, like 40 minutes out of Sarasota. Right now, I'm looking out the window, and there's a couple of horses and about 50 cows, it's pretty cool out here. So we come out here and hang out for awhile, and then we practice three or four times. Then we might

go back into the city, have a taco salad, or something. Then we come back and record for awhile." Not bad work, if you can get it. Kelly talks about the album that they've been diligently working on all summer. "The album will probably have about 18 songs on it, because they're all pretty short. It's going to be early Dollyrots, raw. We're going to try to put down what we've done so far. We're ready to write new songs, so we want to get all the old ones recorded first. We hope to have it finished in a month." Kelly cites the Ronettes, Pixies, Donnas, Elvis, and Billy Idol as her musical influences. All are masters at crafting 2 to 3 minutes of pure pop bliss. Expect a similar collection of hits from "Pink

Punk Poodle". "It's not like we make them super-catchy on purpose", Kelly claims. "We just try not to make them too difficult for people to get. We're not a pop song writing machine, at least not yet." Maybe not, but with an average age of 22, the Dollyrots certainly have time on their side. A record contract, well, that's a different story. "We were talking to a guy out here about putting out the record locally, but I don't know if we're going to do it, because he

wants me to sing in a 'monotone fashion', and it just doesn't work. He seems to think that it's amazing, he wants to shop it out to Columbia and Sony and stuff, but we just wouldn't be happy doing that, it just wouldn't sound right. He just didn't appreciate the high-pitched frequencies, I guess. We'll probably just end up releasing it ourselves." I ask her about the Dollyrots plans, after the record is released. "If we don't move out west anytime soon, we'll probably go mope around somewhere. I don't know if you could really call it a tour, but that's what we'll play it off as. I just really want to get out here and see what happens." Kelly's band mates call her for practice, but before I let her go, I ask her what she thinks the Dollyrots appeal is, why even rock and roll burn-outs like myself are so easily swayed by their sunny pop punk. "I think it's just that it makes people happy," she says simply. "We're not pissed off, we're not whining, we don't really have anything to be sad about. Everybody has crap to deal with, but we're not going to complain about it. We don't want to be angst-driven brats, we just want everybody to be happy. That's what it's all about, I think. It makes you feel good." And what more, brothers and sisters, can you ask from a rock band?

Get Happy now : www.dollyrots.com

SLEAZEGRINDER'S TOP 10:

Black Cat 9 — "Cathouse" (www.angelfire.com/bc/black-cat9) Italian hard raunch that sounds like Angus Young and Ace Frehley trying desperately to contain Axl's high register screech. The purest dose of high octane sleaze I've heard all year.

United Enemies (Power Music) "I Don't Wanna Change" Iggy on the megaphone, the Love Reaction all hopped up on pop songs and crystal, United Enemies are primo Swedish swagger rock. Bonus points for releasing a one-song single. That, my friends, is quality control at it's swankiest.

Kissinger — "Charm" (www.kissingertheband.com) The best hi-gloss, arena ready power pop band since "Saturation"-era Urge Overkill. This is exactly what would happen if Weezer were

made up of the cool kids instead of the dorks.

Suckerstarz — demo (www.geocities.com/suckerstarz) The Hungarian Hanoi Rocks. As if the Finnish version makes more geographical sense. Support the cause and send these cats your old leopard skin cowboy hats and leather pants, because that shit's pretty scarce over there. Further proof that the Rock is a global curse.

Smithwick Machine (www.smithwickmachine.com) Like cracking open some ancient vault and finding "Ziggy Stardust 2". Smithwick Machine answer that oft-asked question: Do Mexican brass sections and cocktail xylophones belong in heavy rock? Yes. Yes they fucking do.

Space Surfers — "Bikini" (www.spacesurfers.com) Take an Italian supermodel, give her a guitar and a stack full of Blondie, Cheap Trick, and Sigue Sigue Sputnik records, and...well, that pretty much says it all, doesn't it? The CD's booklet says, "Cool kids like the big guitars more than naked movie stars". I'm assuming you're ordering the record already.

Comes With the Fall — "This is Year One" (www.comeswiththefall.com) Well, I wrote the liner notes, so what do you think it sounds like? Stellar, high gloss hard rock that sounds like the early Alice Cooper band and Mother Love Bone had more in common than drug-addicted lead singers. If these cats catch fire, then rock radio is saved. Rise and join the Fallen, citizen.

Gonzalez — demo (www.stonerrock.com/gonzalez) Stoner rock and rollah, heavy ass riffs and clanging cowbells, love rock gone wrong and greasy mustaches all around.

Lo-Ball — "It's OK, I'm with the Band" (www.lo-ball.com) Entirely fuckable and infectiously catchy sleaze pop from these LA ultravixens. The cock rock Spice Girls. Check out their performance in the "Badsville" movie — it's the ginchiest.

Bad Wizard — "Free and Easy" (www.teepeerecords.com) The greatest 8-track tape that never existed, in a world where the MC5 signed to Motown and the freaks ran wild in the streets, naked and unafraid.

GUEST LIST: STACEY SLEAZEGRINDER'S TOP TEN:

Sure, she's my wife, my number one supergirl, the gleam in Sleazegrinder's eye, but Stacey's also prone to laying down the good word on the global hipster indie rock scene in the Girl Powered websites www.coolgrrrls.com and www.womanrock.com under the nom de pop of Stacey Dawn. Although she doesn't seem to get the sublime pleasures of Dirty Southern Stoner Doom, her tastes are otherwise impeccable.

Audra and The Antidote — "Hello?"

(www.theantidote.net) Pure pop/rock gems are all you'll find on this disk. Keep your eye on this up and coming Nashville-based band, they're destined to go far.

The Space Surfers — "Bikini" (www.spacesurfers.com) With songs about comic books, cartoon characters and sex, how can you go wrong?

The Switchblade Kittens — "Hey Punk, Try Heroine(s)" (www.switchbladekittens.com) Girl Punk at its finest...they even do a punk cover of "My Heart Will Go On (Love Theme from The Titanic)"!

Honey Tongue — demo (www.honeytongue.net) Powerful, soulful, female-fronted Seattle rock. A nice break from the

SLEAZEGRINDER

screaming noise blaring out of the radio. Produced by Brett Eliason (Pearl Jam).

Lo-Ball — CD Sampler "It's Okay, I'm with the Band" (www.lo-ball.com) You want girls who know how to rock...you got it! Unfortunately, this band is currently searching for a new lead singer.

The Lollies — "Bang! Bang! Bang! Lookout, Lookout, Lookout!" (www.thelollies.co.uk) Fun, catchy, head-bopping Britpop.

Sticky Sweet — demo (no website) And there shall be fun, London, glamster power pop for the masses...stay tuned...

Slush Puppy — (Pre-Release CD)

(www.slushpuppyrocks.com) Fierce girl-powered rock 'n' roll. Enough said!

Fire Bug — CD Single "Wise Girl"

(www.firebugmusic.com) Gorgeous pop music...good for the soul.

Freezepop — "Freezepop Forever" (www.freezepop.net) A tasty synthpop treat reminiscent of bands like Kraftwerk, Pulsars and Depeche Mode.

PEACE DOG

As a lowly sleazy rock journalist, it's hardly my place to lay on political commentary, but the sky is falling, and who knows how deep into the mud of global conflict we're gonna get pushed in the coming year? This is no Gonzo freak-force revolution. Suddenly, it's not the screw-heads versus the doomed anymore, we're all pretty much doomed at the moment. And as super-cool and bad ass as it is being an American, maybe it's time we, as a very large and unwieldy group of humans, stop thinking in those kinds of terms once and for all. Maybe it's time we dropped the pretence of race and borders, and just started looking out for one another wherever the fuck we are on this planet. The rock nation, after all, is a world-wide phenomenon, and despite some fucked up accents here and there, we all get along famously, our only conflicts relegated to trash talk and a few fist fights along the way in our glorious 50 years of existence. Trivial as it may seem in the smoke of this tragedy, rock and rollers look out for each other. I got e-mails and phone calls from my rock brothers and sisters from all over the world this week, and they weren't even hassling me for reviews this time, they were just making sure I was alive and well, offering sympathy, support, and prayers. I'm guessing the same thing happened to you. We are all very lucky motherfuckers in many, many ways. I already know a few cats in NYC that weren't so lucky, and this might only be the beginning of some very heavy days indeed. The rock must roll on, and it will, but do me a favor — take care of each other, brothers and sisters. As Zodiac Mindwarp once said, "The power of love, baby. Don't fuck with it." ☺

Still rocking in the dead end zone,

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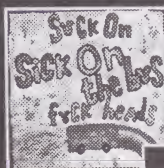
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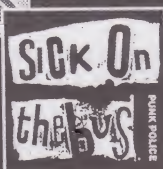


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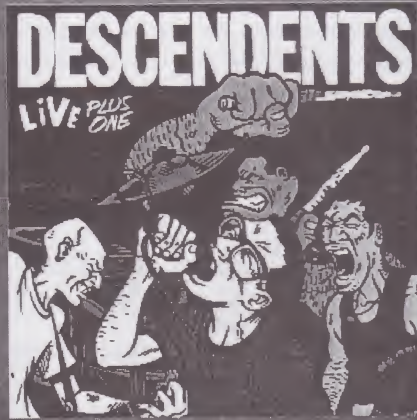
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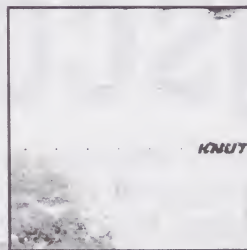
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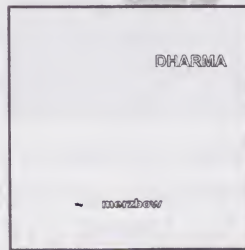
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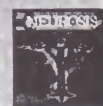
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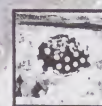
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SCOTT MORGAN

INTERVIEW AND INTRODUCTION BY TONY SLUG



THE RATIONALS

AS ONE OF THE MOST DISTINCTIVE VOICES AND LONG-LASTING PERSONALITIES IN MICHIGAN'S STORIED ROCK'N'ROLL HISTORY, SCOTT MORGAN HAS KEPT THE MOTOR CITY'S FLAME BURNING FOR 35 YEARS AND COUNTING. ALTHOUGH HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH GROUPS SUCH AS THE RATIONALS AND THE MYTHIC SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND (ALONG WITH EX-MC5 GUITARIST FRED "SONIC" SMITH AND STOOGES DRUMMER SCOTT ASHETON) MADE HIM A BONA FIDE LEGEND THROUGHOUT THE UNDERGROUND ROCK'N'ROLL WORLD, SCOTT HAS NEVER BEEN CONTENT TO REST ON HIS LAURELS OR LOOK BACK NOSTALGICALLY ON HIS PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS. AND IF THE CURRENT RELEASES THAT HE HAS COMING OUT PROVIDE ANY INDICATION, HE SEEMS TO BE GOING STRONGER NOW THAN EVER. MORE RELEASES ARE IN THE WORKS, AND AN INTERNATIONAL SCOTT MORGAN TRIBUTE ALBUM WILL ALSO BE COMING OUT.

Scott recently finished a European tour with renowned Radio Birdman guitarist Deniz Tek, and proved that he is still capable of mustering twice as much energy on stage as most musicians half his age. Afterwards, he flew to Amsterdam to record a second album with the Hydromatics, an international outfit that includes me, part-time *Hit List* columnist and full-time wise guy, on guitar. I was therefore able to talk with Scott at some length about the past, present, and future of his musical career.

Tony Slug: Let's start from the beginning. How did the Rationals come together?

Scott Morgan: Steve Correll, the guitar player, and I went to the same high school. He found out that I played guitar, and asked me to play him something over the telephone. I played a Ventures song and he said it sounded good, so we got together and started jamming. It was all instrumentals at the time. We originally had a couple of different drummers just playing a snare drum with us, but eventually we met a couple of other guys. Bill Figg became our drummer, and Terry Trabandt our bassist. We only started working on vocals around 1964 because of the Beatles and the whole British Invasion thing. Then we started recording some demos, and eventually we got a manager, Jeep Holland,

who was a club DJ. He took us to a real studio, where we recorded our first single on a 4-track. And it became the number 1 song on an Ann Arbor radio station. Later that summer we returned to school, and to our surprise were now considered celebrities. After that we did a few other singles, including "Leaving Here", which had "Respect" by Otis Redding on the B-side. By that time we had totally dropped the British band thing and had gone totally in an R&B direction. The DJ's flipped it over and made "Respect" the A-side.

TS: ...which actually became a chart hit?

Scott: Yeah, first in Detroit then in the rest of the Midwest, including Cleveland and Chicago. Then it went nationwide. We were on the same label then as Question Mark & the Mysterians and Bob Seger.

TS: I assume that you didn't see too much money from your hit record.

Scott: No, but it allowed us to play and make, um, a little bit of money.

TS: It must've been helpful in getting the Rationals on TV...

Scott: Oh yeah. There were lots of TV

appearances. We did all kinds of shows, mostly in the Midwest (Cleveland, Detroit, etc.) but also in Philadelphia.

TS: Then you got to play shows with some of the biggest names in the 60s, right?

Scott: Yeah, first with the Young Rascals and bands like that. Later on, we did another single called "I Need You", a Kinks cover, and the band went in more of a rock direction. We kinda dropped the R&B/soul thing and started playing the Grande Ballroom, where the MC5 were the house band. That would be around 1968, when the Stooges were just forming.

TS: I recall reading somewhere that the Rationals actually opened for Pink Floyd at some point or another.

Scott: Several times. We opened for many bands that came to Detroit, like the Who. And we opened for Jimi Hendrix in Flint, Michigan.

TS: And of course the local bands, most notably the MC5 and the Stooges, whom you've known for most of your life...

Scott: I first met the Five in '66 at an MC 5



show. Somehow I ended up talking to Wayne Kramer for a long time. He was the talkative guy in the band. The next time I saw him they had a new bass player, Michael Davis, and a new drummer, Dennis Thompson. So that is the MC5 as we know it. I went to high school with the Stooges. Jim Osterberg is 3 or 4 years older than me. Scott and Ron are closer to my age, and we all went to the same junior high school. So I got to know the Five really early on, and got to stay at their house in Detroit before they moved to Ann Arbor. And then I saw them all the time. They had moved out of Detroit after the riots, and had gotten a deal with Elektra; the Stooges basically got the same deal with Elektra. They already had trans-love energies, and now they were forming the White Panther organization, which was based on the Black Panthers, a radical political thing.

TS: That must have been pretty crazy.

Scott : At the time it didn't seem too crazy because we were in the midst of a revolution in the United States, you know. It was during the Vietnam War, the marijuana laws were ridiculous, politically everything was still like a 50's mentality. It just seemed logical to us to create a new world.

TS: "Dope, guns, and fucking in the

streets." That sounds just like Amsterdam!

Scott: Well, we really didn't go along with that violence trip. I don't even think the Five went along with all that. They just happened to be lumped in with it. They just wanted to be a rock'n'roll band. A big rock'n'roll band. Then John Sinclair got sent away to jail...

TS: The notorious "10 for 2" deal.

Scott: Yes, ten years for two joints. When he was in jail the Five left Ann Arbor and that whole White Panther thing behind.

TS: Incidentally, a friend of mine just met him here by some weird coincidence.

Scott: I think John comes over for the Cannabis Cup awards.

TS: That sounds about right then, since this friend of mine sells weed to local coffeshops. So what happened with the Five while Sinclair was incarcerated?

Scott: They recorded their second album with John Landau, the third they pretty much did themselves, and when John came out there was this big rally with John Lennon.

TS: And you were credited on "High Times", since you played on it. This was around the time the Rationals broke up?

Scott: The Rationals broke up in 1970, after our second manager just up and left! He didn't even say good bye, you know (laughs), so we were kinda left rudderless and running our own affairs. Basically, everyone had different ideas about the band's direction and how we should do things. Finally, we just said "let's hang it up", you know?

TS: Yeah. What did you do then?

Scott: I decided to start my own band with Terry from the Rationals, my brother David on drums, and a guitar player named Tex Gabriel from Detroit, who was later in the Plastic Ono Band. When he left we recruited a high school friend named Jeff Jones and kept recording. Then we got John Sinclair

and Pete Andrews from SRC to manage us.

TS: And this band was called Guardian Angel?

Scott: Yeah, but we changed the name to Lightnin' because John Sinclair thought Guardian Angel sounded too wimpy. ~(laughs)

TS: After Sinclair got out of jail and the MC5 had moved, what else was there for him to do?

Scott: He ran Rainbow Multi Media, which was his operation and was still based in the same house on Hill Street, along with Gary Grimshaw, a famous artist from Detroit who did a lot of posters for the Grande Ballroom. He designed a logo for us.

TS: I've seen a book with reproductions of a few of those posters in it. Some of the bills at the Grande Ballroom were just stunning. Crazy-ass! Anyway, did Guardian Angel/Lightnin' put out any records?

Scott: We recorded a studio album, and then I left the band (laughs). I just got fed up with the whole thing. Next, I moved on to Sonic's Rendezvous Band.

TS: Is there truth to the rumor you turned down an offer from Blood, Sweat and Tears to become their singer?

Scott: Yeah, but that would have been in late 1968, maybe 1969. We had met Al Kooper in Cleveland and become friends with him. When we met their manager the next time they played Detroit, for some reason they'd fired Al Kooper. I don't really know why, but their manager asked me if I wanted to audition for them. I said "no, not really, I've already got a band."

TS: Heh, heh. And a few years later, the MC5 broke up and the Stooges split up.

Scott: Yes, it all happened around the same time! The Stooges broke up in L.A.

TS: But Sonic's Rendezvous band didn't

start right away though, did it?

Scott: The first thing I did was try to hook up with Wayne Kramer and start something else, but Wayne was on his way to jail. He advised me to talk to Fred Smith, so I went down to Fred's house and we had a good time. We started trying to put a band together, but had a lot of different changes. Fred and I even drove to L.A. to try to get something going and find some connections. We recorded a single, "Slow Down take A Look"/"Soulmover", then started a band with Mike Davis from the MC5, Fred, and Bill Figg and Terry Trabandt from the Rationals. This was called the Scott Morgan Band, but that fell apart too. When we came back to Ann Arbor we stopped working together for about six months. That woulda been the Winter of 1974. In the Spring of 1975 we began working again together, and by the end of the year Scott Asheton had come back from Los Angeles. He didn't have any money, had lost his drums, and had moved back into his mothers house, so I persuaded him to join our band. On bass we had a guy named Ron Cooke, who was in a band called Catfish and had been in Detroit, Mitch Ryder's Detroit. That was the band lineup for the rest of 1975 and 1976.

TS: So Gary Rasmussen didn't join the band until later?

Scott: Yeah. Ron seemed more interested in motorcycles. He was in a Harley biker club. Then Gary joined. He had been in this band called the Up that the Rationals played a lot of shows with. And that's how Sonic's Rendezvous Band stayed until we broke up in 1980.

TS: I've got seven or so different live SRB tapes, all recorded within a relatively short time span, like two and a half years, and it's remarkable how drastically the band evolved.

Scott: Oh, yeah.

TS: Every set is entirely different from the last, and even the individual songs were always developing, changing and growing. You were very creative and prolific.

Scott: Sure, yeah. Fred and I were both writing songs, but we were also doing a lot of covers.

TS: Apart from the high-octane rock, I hear Chuck Berry and even some bluesy stuff.

Scott: Everything but the kitchen sink!

TS: But you never toured, did you?

Scott: We were just playing bars and small venues around Detroit. Places like the Second Chance in Ann Arbor, and in other towns in the Michigan area. We played in Cleveland, a few shows in Canada, including Toronto, and in Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and all around the Great Lakes.

TS: At this time, punk hadn't even happened yet. I'm curious about how people responded to the intensity of Sonic's Rendezvous Band's sound back then.

Scott: Uh, it was kinda mixed.

TS: The lack of a market or target audience for that kind of music might explain why Sonic's Rendezvous band never got the success they deserved when they were still functional as a group.

Scott: Well, we also had no business manager, we only had our road manager, Freddie Brooks. Fred Smith had his own manager, Chato Hill, who was more like the guy with the money. But we never had any big success or anything: we didn't make a lot of money, never did an album, never toured extensively, never had a record deal. We put out "City Slang", and that's the only thing we ever released.

TS: There's no justice in rock'n'roll. So why didn't you release anything yourselves?

Scott: Fred had this thing - he thought we shouldn't sign a record deal for less than \$50,000, which is what the MC5 signed for.

TS: OK, another year or two down the line, and punk is booming in Detroit. I'm thinking of bands like the Ramrods, Flirt, the Re-runs, even the Romantics. How did you relate to this new generation?

Scott: Oh yeah, there were lots of punk and New Wave bands. We did a lot of shows with them, but we weren't really a punk band. We were older than them, for one thing. (laughs)

TS: The fact that you all had long hair and played solos would be a good indication of that, too.

Scott: Yeah (laughs), we played a lot of solos. We opened for the Ramones, and got to be fairly good friends with them.

TS: They've always been quite vocal about being fans of SRB's collective past.

Scott : Yeah, they were pretty happy to have a guy from the MC5, a guy from the Stooges, one from the Rationals, and a guy the Up in one band opening for them.

TS: Did you get to talk to them in later years?

Scott: Oh yeah. I saw Joey play last October - the last show he did before he died - with Daniel Ray and Andy Shernoff from the Dictators. I told Joey I had come down to see him because he had come to see me. I had played at some tiny little club in L.A. right after the Ramones very last show, which was a huge event. The police were blocking off streets and stuff. Afterwards Joey came to this little bar to see me play.

TS: That's very cool. And while were on the subject of Punk Godfathers...here you are in one of the greatest rock'n'roll bands ever, but the time and the place are all wrong. You're busting your balls trying to break out of the state of Michigan with next to no success. That must have been like holding a \$100,000 check with nowhere to cash it! Then suddenly local yokel Iggy gets his head out of Bowie's cocaine tray, and the first thing he does is steal your band.

Scott: Yeah, we were just getting a bit of a name for ourselves, and in the meantime Fred had met Patti Smith and there was something there, you know, between them. Iggy was over in Europe and needed a really good band because his career was hitting the skids, and he thought it would be a good idea if he had SRB backing him up. So he asked the band to come over without me.

TS: What a bummer that must have been.

Scott : Well, when Fred came to me and told me they were going over to Europe I said "that's probably is a good idea, maybe it will

help our thing," you know? But I think Iggy had ulterior motives. He wanted them to be his backup band, he wanted them to be like the Stooges. So they went over to Europe, did the tour, and came back.

TS: This was the "TV Eye" tour in 1978, right?

Scott: I think it was the "New Values" tour.

TS: Huh? I saw Iggy on the "New Values" tour in 1979, and he had a black dude wearing a cowboy hat on guitar. You probably mean the "TV Eye" tour!

Scott: No, it was the "New Values" tour. They were doing "Endless Sea" and "Curiosity", and it was the Summer of 1978.

TS: Oh well, OK, whatever.

Scott: The plan was to get the "City Slang/Electroponic Tonic" single out and

some demo recording while they were in Europe.

TS: After they had just kicked you to the curb earlier!?

Scott: Yeah, so I got upset that he was upset and, you know, I probably said something I shouldn't have said. (laughs) Like "I don't want "Electroponic Tonic" to be released." Then you end up kicking yourself years later, if not a minute later. So "City Slang" came out as a two-sided single. We were gonna come up with something else later, but it just never happened.

TS: That's such a shame. Since you've recently finished a European tour with Deniz Tek, I was wondering whether you already knew Deniz back in those days.

Scott: Deniz and I went to the same high school. He's a little younger than I am. We didn't know each other back then, but he

kinds of bands are still covering your stuff. There's even a band named after the SRB song "Asteroid B-612".

Scott: Yes, I know. They're putting out a release on Freakshow Records too.

TS: Great! What about the Dodge Main project? This is with Deniz, Wayne Kramer, and I think Wayne's bass player, Paul III.

Scott: Right, and Brock Avery is on drums. Deniz and Wayne were gonna do something together and they said "We're doing 'I Got a Right' and 'City Slang', would you like to sing?" And I said "of course." Dodge Main only played a few shows. We recorded one of them with Scott Asheton on drums and Gary Rasmussen on bass. And Jimmy Zero from the Dead Boys sat in for the encore.

TS: Wow.

AT THE TIME IT DIDN'T SEEM TOO CRAZY BECAUSE WE WERE IN THE MIDST OF A REVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES, YOU KNOW. IT WAS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, THE MARIJUANA LAWS WERE RIDICULOUS, POLITICALLY EVERYTHING WAS STILL LIKE A 50'S MENTALITY. IT JUST SEEMED LOGICAL TO US TO CREATE A NEW WORLD.

then, when they got back from Europe, we would be ready to launch a rocket. Iggy wanted them to stay on, and they said "no, we're going back, we've got our own band." Then Fred and I had this big argument about "Electroponic Tonic", and we decided not to release it.

TS: What was that all about?

Scott: He was upset because I had done



SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS BAND

came to a SRB gig and just came on stage and jammed with us. That was around 1978, probably. He took all of his knowledge of Detroit music with him to Australia.

TS: Like Johnny Appleseed, eh? It amazes me how popular SRB became there to this very day. Probably Deniz is responsible for all that. I find it the impact amazing, for a band that never made a record. I mean, twenty-something years down the line all

Scott: Deniz and I wanted to get this record out and do more stuff together, but we can't always afford to fly him in just for one show, since there's not enough money for that. Then he said 'hey I'm going to Europe with these guys from Italy called Sonic Assassin, would you like to join?' And I said 'Yep, I'm there.'

TS: What did you do after SRB broke up?

Scott: I left the band in 1980 and started my

own group, the Scott Morgan Band, which eventually became Scot's Pirates. This was with Kathy Dechaine, my girlfriend at the time, Scott Asheton, and Gary Rasmussen, and we did three records together.

TS: Basically, all of SRB minus Fred.

Scott: Yeah, Fred had married Patti Smith,

well elaborate on this and reveal the formation of the Hydromatics...Nicke and I later got this idea that we should get together sometime to record some SRB tunes for the hell of it, for our personal enjoyment mainly. But that plan was quickly put on the shelf, given our geographical locations, plus the fact that the Hellacopters had meanwhile began to tour

we started. As one reviewer put it, this was our little "Scandinavian version of a rock'n'roll fantasy camp, playing in some legendary Ann Arbor outfit." Heh heh.

Scott: Geoff said to me, "why don't you get in touch with these Hellacopter guys?" So I went to New York to see the first Hellacopters gig at CBGB's, I think they were



THE HYDROMATICS

CHUCK BERRY WAS A HUGE INFLUENCE ON ALL THE BANDS BACK AT THE TIME WE STARTED. SO IT'S NOT REALLY THAT MUCH OF A DIVERSION TO PUT A LITTLE MORE SOUL BACK IN THE ROCK. AND IT'S TOTALLY UNLIKE THE CURRENT METAL/ROCK/HIP-HOP WAY, YOU KNOW? THEY'RE STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO REDO THE AEROSMITH/RUN DMC VERSION OF "WALK THIS WAY".

and they kind of retired until the late 80s, raising a family in Detroit. After the end of Scot's Pirates, I was kind of looking for something to do. Then Geoff Ginsberg, who we both know, started telling me about the Hellacopters, who were doing "City Slang" and had only just recently covered "Heaven". Geoff had been over here before to Amsterdam to hear you play. Either with B.G.K. or with Loveslug.

TS: I've known Geoff for a long time. As far as the Hellacopters are concerned, I've been quite the little Johnny Appleseed myself, and have been spreading the word about them incessantly ever since they graced Holland during their first European tour. In fact, SRB is the main reason why I became friends with them in the first place, so that's funny...Hmm, we might as

all over the planet so extensively. I didn't think about it anymore really, until one night when Nicke called me long-distance. I said "Dude, it's 5:30 AM here, this had better be good." But he's all excited, and he tells me that five minutes earlier he had been playing "City Slang" with Scott Morgan on stage. I knew that meant a lot to him, so I was real happy for him about that. Then he asked if I thought he should ask you whether you'd consider participating in our side-project thing.

Scott: (laughs) and the rest is history!

TS: Absolutely! I said "Hell, yeah!" 'cause if we wanna do a Rendezvous Band sort of thing, it doesn't get much better than going straight to the source for help. So that, in a nutshell, is the story about how

playing with the Dictators. Finally, I got in touch with their manager in Stockholm, who arranged for us to do some recording sessions, and we recorded "Downright Blue" with Daniel Rey. The second time the Hellacopters came over to the US, I travelled with them to Cleveland, Chicago, and back to Detroit, so that must have been around the time when you talked to Nicke.

TS: Right.

Scott: Then Nicke asked me if I wanted to come over and do this record, and he said he wanted to play drums! I didn't know that he used to be the drummer for the Entombed. He also told me that there were some guys in Amsterdam who would play guitar and bass", so it was pretty strange. But Geoff said "I know those guys and it's all very

cool, you could make a great record."

TS: Thus the Hydromatics were born, with the addition of former Nitwitz bassist Theo Brouwer. That was two years ago. Nicke has since left the band, but the Hydromatics are unstoppable with their new album in the works, which will feature a half dozen songs originally performed by Sonic's Rendezvous Band.

Scott: Along with a bunch of new stuff.

TS: For Nicke and myself, initially the main goal was to document those songs by recording them properly in a studio before our hissy cassette tapes had completely disintegrated or turned to spaghetti. "Sweet Nothing" wasn't yet out at the time.

Scott: I think they're being recorded properly. (laughs) We're lucky we found someone to replace Nicke, who's got a career going with the Hellacopters and no longer has the time it takes to be in two bands.

TS: And this band's members live in three different countries, separated by an ocean. The upside to Nicke's departure is that the press can't call us a "Scandinavian" band anymore, but finding someone else was a drag once we had to dismiss Rock (Scott Asheton) as a possible drummer. I was brainstorming and power-dialing, calling people like Danny Young from Gluecifer, Chris Summers from Turbonegro, and any other candidates I could think of. All of them wanted to do it, but each time something interfered, so it was looking pretty bleak right up until the last minute, until you hooked us up with Andy Frost.

• **Scott:** I've only played with him for maybe six months, after he kept asking me to. Then he became our drummer. It was all very last minute.

TS: Yeah. we were worried, because replacing Nicke is a tall order, and we didn't know anything about Andy. But he turned out to be one of the hardest-hitting drummers I've played with yet. And/that is no small feat. He's got that Rock Action beat going on big time. The Frost Giant kicks ass!

Scott: He did a great job, and he's not in another band so that's another plus.

TS: Let's talk more about the Hydromatics later. There's also some other things you're involved in.

Scott: Yeah. About a year ago we did a Rendezvous Band reunion with Deniz Tek, although there's no way that Fred's shoes could be fully filled.

TS: I would say that any attempt to match Fred would be a losing scenario.

Scott: But Deniz was plenty good enough to sit in and be the lead guitar player. We also did some stuff with him singing. And he also played Fred's old Epiphone.

TS: Talk about kick-ass guitars! That Epiphone with the batwing-shaped top, shit, that thing is just too cool.

Scott: It's a Crestwood. Fred sold it to Deniz and then later tried to buy it back. But Deniz said "No way, I'm not selling it back to you." (laughs)

TS: Smart move. So that Rendezvous Band reunion show came out on a CD some time ago.

Scott: It's the first release on Geoff Ginsberg's new label, Real-O-Mind.

TS: What other Scott Morgan stuff has hit the streets lately?

Scott: A re-released single that Fred and I recorded with "Take a Look" and "Soulmover" on it. Geoff also listened to each and every one of my cassette tapes (laughs) and put together this compilation, mostly with stuff that hasn't been released before. It's called "Medium Rare".

TS: And this is a legit release! Which material did Geoff pick for inclusion on this album? He had three decades of work to choose from, didn't he?

Scott: He picked one track by the original Rationals, three tracks from the Rationals reunion, and a bunch of my solo stuff: some songs I recorded recently in Los Angeles at the old Beach Boys' studio, one track I recorded with Scott Asheton on drums, and a bunch of demo stuff, that sort of thing.

TS: OK, and of course there's "Sweet Nothing", a posthumous Sonic's

Rendezvous Band live record. What's the story with that?

Scott: It's out on Mack Aborn, a company owned by our old road manager Freddie Brooks, who's a fan and a friend of the band. "Sweet Nothing" was recorded at the Second Chance in Ann Arbor by WCBN, a local radio station. It was a really good recording, we did a good performance that night, and the material was good.

TS: Freddie Brooks has done the world a great big favor by releasing this stuff, 'cause on some of those bootlegs out there, to say the sound is "crummy" would be an understatement. Plus, those knuckleheads got the song titles all wrong and mixed up. If you're gonna bootleg something, please make an effort to do it right!

Scott: Yeah. Mack Aborn also put out another SRB record, which is the second edition of "City Slang". It has the original version with a new mix, and then some more live stuff.

TS: Totally high-energy rock'n'roll. The kind of stuff that you're still playing with the Hydromatics two decades later.

Scott: That's the reason why I'm here! (laughs)

TS: With the rest of us firmly rooted in late 70's punk and early 80's hardcore, one need not worry about the band getting too slow. Jeff Bale gave me carte blanche to freely honk the Hydromatics' horn in *Hit List*, so let's do it!

Scott: With Deniz I went to France and Italy, so I was in Europe already. We took advantage of that opportunity to record the second Hydromatics album in Amsterdam for a new Italian label called Freakshow Records. We're hoping to tour around September, some time after the record is released. It sounds great. I didn't think we could top the first one, because that one just turned out so well. But it just clicked with the four of us. You and me, Theo, and Nicke work really well together.

TS: We did our homework, like good boys.

Scott: Yes, you sure did. Everything worked out fine, the Yland Studio, Evert Kaatee, the engineer. I think it's the best thing ever released that I've been involved in.

TS: I take that as a big compliment.

Scott: That new record, I don't know man. (laughs) To me, it sounds really good.

TS: We must, at all costs, avoid what I call "the dreaded second album syndrome." You know, a great debut album followed up by a double dose of horse manure.

Scott: We're stretching it a little bit maybe by using the Hectic Horns again, who did brass arrangements on the first one, but I expect that to be helpful. Again, we're doing some Sonics RB songs because those songs were pretty much only recorded live. But I also think that a lot of new material is very strong.

TS: Anything but your standard, run-of-the-mill punk rock. Some of your new stuff has a bit of an R&B feel, which is familiar territory to you. I mean real R&B, not like the formulaic MTV stuff nowadays.

Scott: Even when Nicke was still in the band we had already talked about combining r'n'r with the soul thing, which he is heavily into. Theo is also heavily into it. But I think we succeeded in making it sound like one band, not two separate bands.

TS: I'm not a big soul buff actually, but sure, I can appreciate it for what it is. I'll take soul music over the next Korn/Limp Bizkit clone any day.

Scott: Oh, you mean the "new" thing? (laughs)

TS: Is that the "new thing"? Uh, I wouldn't really know.

Scott: I come from Detroit, where Kid Rock is now the big thing, Eminem, Kid Rock's guitar player Ken Olson, and I played together for about a year actually. (laughs) Uh, I'm trying to be diplomatic here. Kids today don't even know who the Stooges are, who the MC5 are, who the Rationals are, or who Sonics Rendezvous Band is. To me the Hydromatics are just pure Detroit rock and soul. We're going back to the roots of all those bands. The MC5 and Stooges were TOTALLY rooted in black music.

TS: Sure. My theory about why 99% of all "punk" or "hardcore" sucks beyond imagination these days is that its roots go no

further back than five years or so. Especially with hardcore, a particularly stale subgenre where not clinging to the same overused formula means losing face instantly. At some point you simply need some variety, as well as some other influences. But they've got to be the right influences! And that, kids, is the tricky part. Unfortunately, most current r'n'r bands fumble the ball and fail miserably.

Scott: You know, Fred Smith actually grew up listening to country and western music. He was born in West Virginia, and his father taught him to play guitar and banjo and stuff like that.

TS: With early hardcore basically being speeded up punk, which was in turn speeded up Stones, eventually you get back to Chuck Berry. It's pretty simple, really, although nowadays a lot of hardcore has completely lost touch with its rock-'n'roll roots.

Scott: Chuck Berry was a huge influence on all the bands back at the time we started. So it's not really that much of a diversion to put a little more soul back in the rock. And it's totally unlike the current metal/rock/hip-hop way, you know? They're still trying to figure out a way to redo the Aerosmith/Run DMC version of "Walk This Way".

TS: Well, white guys rapping over heavy metal is just modern day buttrock, in my book. And stuff like techno and house are essentially modern forms of disco, the way I see it.

Scott: You can't escape it!

TS: Especially here in Amsterdam, techno central. So are there any other bands out there these days that you do like?

Scott: The Black Crowes. They're a rock-'n'roll band, but they like soul music. "Hard to Handle" is an Otis Redding song.

TS: Yeah. It seems like every subculture gets swallowed up by the big corporate machine faster these days. When the "grunge" thing was happening, major labels would sign ANYBODY who claimed to be affiliated with the "grunge movement", whatever the fuck that meant. I dunno, Seattle, flannel shirts, long hair, maybe. Then with the commercial success

of the Offspring and Green Day, voila, enter 'MTV punk.'

Scott: That's what happened in Detroit in the 60s. A feeding frenzy. "Baby bands, look! You can eat them!" So, nothing's really changed. Right now Detroit is really hot again because of Kid Rock and Eminem - there must be like 20 bands there who are getting signed by majors.

TS: You're all over those "Motor City is Burning" compilation albums, and they seem to promote the idea of a certain sound that's intrinsic to Detroit. Do you think such a "Detroit sound" really exists? Like, when I hear the Gories, I really don't hear anything "Detroit Sounding" there. But maybe that's just because those guys kinda suck.

Scott: Everybody in the Detroit area grew up on the Motown sound. There was a LOT of independent rhythm and blues that came out of Detroit. There was a rockabilly scene in the 50s, too, but the main influence was soul music, and later Motown became huge. Detroit is also a big jazz town.

TS: We've gotta wrap this up. My last question is: you're 52 years old now, right?

Scott: Yeah.

TS: After playing rock'n'roll music for over 35 years, do you ever think about calling it a day and just retiring?

Scott: Actually, I feel like I'm just getting started.

TS: Amen! ✚



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THE INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER: “PEACE ACTIVISTS” WITH A SECRET AGENDA

BY KEVIN COOGAN

INTRODUCTION

On September 29th, 2001, just a few weeks following the September 11th terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, a large peace rally was held in Washington, D.C., to oppose an American military response for the attack. The main

organizer of the D.C. rally, ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), was officially established shortly after the 9/11 attack. The leading force behind ANSWER's creation is the International Action Center (IAC), which represents itself as a progressive organization devoted to peace, justice, and human rights issues. The IAC's organizational clout is considerable: for the past decade it has played a leading role in organizing protest

demonstrations against U.S. military actions against both Iraq and Serbia. After the September 11th attack, the IAC decided to turn its long-organized planned protest against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank gathering, scheduled for the 29th, into an action opposing any use of U.S. military power in response to terrorism.

The IAC owes its current success to Ramsey Clark, a former Attorney General



=WWP?

during the Johnson Administration, who is listed on the IAC's website as its founder. Clark's establishment credentials have caused many in the mass media to accept the IAC's self-portrayal as a group of disinterested humanitarians appalled by war and poverty who are working to turn American foreign policy towards a more humane course. On its website the IAC says it was "Founded by Ramsey Clark" and then describes its purpose: "Information, Activism, and Resistance to U.S. Militarism, War, and Corporate Greed, Linking with Struggles Against Racism and Oppression within the United States."

Yet since its inception in 1992, the IAC's actions have given rise to serious doubts about its bona fides as an organization truly committed to peace and human rights issues. Behind the blue door entrance to the IAC's headquarters on 14th Street in Manhattan can be found deeper shades of red. When one looks closely at the IAC, it becomes impossible to ignore the overwhelming presence of members of an avowedly Marxist-Leninist sect called the Workers World Party (WWP), whose cadre staff virtually all of the IAC's top positions. Whether or not the IAC is simply a WWP front group remains difficult to say. Nor is there any

evidence that Ramsey Clark himself is a WWP member. What does seem undeniable is that without the presence of scores of WWP cadre working inside the IAC, the organization would for all practical purposes cease to exist. Therefore, even if Clark is not a WWP member, he is following a political course that meets with the complete approval of one of the most pro-Stalinist sects ever to emerge from the American far left.

PART ONE: RAMSEY CLARK FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL TO THE IAC

Before analyzing the role of the WWP in both the creation and control of the IAC, it is first necessary to explain just how the IAC managed to link up with Clark, a 74-year old Texas-born lawyer and the IAC's one big name media star. The son of Supreme Court Justice Tom Clark (himself a Attorney General in the Johnson administration), Ramsey Clark radiates "middle America" with his puppy

dog eyes, short hair, jug ears, Texas twang, plain talk, and "aw, shucks" demeanor. Clark backs up his folksy public persona with some dazzling credentials that include serving as the National Chairman of the National Advisory Committee of the ACLU, as well as serving as past president of the Federal Bar Association.

Despite his prominence within the establishment, Clark also maintains close ties to the Left. After he ceased being LBJ's Attorney General in 1969 when Nixon became President, Clark visited North Vietnam and condemned U.S. bombing policy over the "Voice of Vietnam" radio station. He also served as a lawyer for peace activist Father Phillip Berrigan, and led a committee that investigated the killing of Chicago Black Panther leader Fred Hampton by local police in collusion with the FBI. At the same time, Clark remained politically active inside the more moderate ranks of the Democratic Party. In 1976, however, his defeat in the New York Democratic primary campaign for Senate ended his political ambitions. From the mid-1970s until today, the Greenwich Village-based Clark has pursued a career as a high-powered defense attorney who specializes in political cases.

Some of Clark's current clients, including Shaykh Umar 'Abd al-Rahman, the "blind Sheik" who was convicted and sentenced to a lengthy prison term for his involvement in helping to organize follow-up terrorist attacks in New York City after the first World Trade Center attack in 1993, are a far cry from Father Berrigan. Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman, of course, deserves legal representation. What makes Clark's approach noteworthy is that in the case of 'Abd al-Rahman (as well as those of Clark's other political clients), his approach is based more on putting the government on trial for its alleged misdeeds than actually proving the innocence of his clients. While completely ignoring Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman's pivotal role in the Egyptian-based Islamist terror group al-Jama'at al-Islamiyyah, as well as the central role that the Shaykh's Jersey City-based mosque played in the first World Trade Center attack, Clark tried to portray the blind Shaykh as a brilliant Islamic scholar and religious thinker who was being persecuted simply as a result of anti-Muslim prejudice on the part of the American government.

Clark appears to be driven by intense rage at what he perceives to be the failures of American foreign policy; a

rage so strong that it may well be irrelevant to him whether his clients are actually innocent or guilty as long as he can use them to strike back at the American establishment which once welcomed him with open arms. After losing his 1976 Senate bid, Clark deepened his opposition to American foreign policy. In June 1980, at a time when American hostages were in their eighth month of captivity in Iran, Clark sojourned to Tehran to take part in a conference on the "Crimes of America" sponsored by Ayatollah Khomeini's theocratic Islamic regime. According to a story on Clark by John Judis that appeared in the April 22nd, 1991 *New Republic*, while in Iran Clark publicly characterized the Carter Administration's failed military attempt to rescue the hostages as a violation of international law. By the time Clark was sipping tea in Tehran, American foreign policy was in shambles. In both Nicaragua and Iran, U.S.-backed dictators had fallen from power. In Europe, the incoming Reagan Administration would soon be faced with a growing neutralist movement that was particularly strong in Germany. Inside the U.S., the anti-nuclear "freeze" movement was then in full swing. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had deployed massive amounts of troops into a formerly neutral nation for the first time since the end of World War II.

By the mid-1980s, however, the combination of Reagan in America and Margaret Thatcher in England had brought the Left to a screeching halt. Huge sums of covert CIA aid allowed the *mujahidin* to turn Afghanistan into a cemetery for Russian soldiers, while in Central America the U.S. managed first to destabilize and then to bring down Cuban-allied states like Nicaragua and Grenada. In the Middle East, the U.S. (with help from Israel) successfully encouraged both Iraq and Iran to fight a long bloody war against each other, a war triggered by Saddam Husayn's attempted invasion of Iran. In 1986 American planes even bombed Libya to punish Colonel Qadhafi for backing terrorist groups in the West. As U.S. power began to reassert itself globally, Clark became even more extreme in his opposition to American foreign policy. He first astonished many on the Left when he agreed to defend former Grenada Defense Minister Bernard Coard, leader of the ultra-leftist clique responsible for the assassination of Maurice Bishop. (It was Bishop's 1983 murder that had supplied the pretext for the U.S. invasion of Grenada.) After the U.S. attack on Libya, Clark journeyed to

Tripoli to offer his condolences to Colonel Qadhafi. That same year he defended Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) leaders from a legal suit brought by the family of Leon Klinghoffer, an elderly retired man in a wheel chair who was murdered by Palestinian terrorists on the Italian cruise ship "Achille Lauro" simply because he was Jewish. Clark even became the lawyer for Nazi collaborator Karl Linnas, who was unsuccessfully fighting deportation to his native Estonia to face war crimes charges.

Clark's next legal client was equally surprising. In 1989 he became Lyndon LaRouche's lead attorney in LaRouche's attempt to appeal his conviction on federal mail fraud charges. LaRouche, who began his political career in the late 1940s as a member of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), had by the late 1970s embraced the far right, anti-Semitism, and Holocaust denial. Clark claimed that the government was persecuting LaRouche solely to suppress his political organizing, and even went so far as to express "amazement" at the personal "vilification" directed at his client! A report from the left-wing watchdog group Political Research Associates suggests that Clark's fondness for LaRouche may have been rooted in LaRouche's aggressive support for Panamanian dictator General Manuel Noriega, who had been forcibly removed from power by the Bush Administration. Both LaRouche and Clark participated in the movement opposed to American military intervention in Panama. Clark even visited Panama in January 1990 as part of an "Independent Commission of Inquiry" to examine American "war crimes." (Not surprisingly, the Commission found America "guilty.")

Clark's willingness to defend political clients so long as he felt he could use their cases to put the American government on trial meant that he was less interested in proving that his clients were saints than in proving that members of his own government were sinners. Clark's logic now began to extend beyond his choice of legal clients to encompass groups that he was willing to collaborate with who he felt might help advance his political agenda. By 1990, Clark decided he was even willing to ally himself closely with an ultra-left Marxist-Leninist sect called the Workers World Party (WWP).

Clark's ties to the WWP first became apparent during the 1990-1991 foreign policy crisis in the Middle East that began unfolding after Iraqi dictator Saddam Husayn invaded Kuwait in an attempt to dominate the Middle East's oil supplies.

During the Winter 1990-91 Mideast crisis, two separate "anti-war" coalitions arose to protest the first Bush Administration's policies. Before the military attack on Iraq took place in January 1991, the Bush Administration (with support both from Congress and many other nations) imposed an economic embargo on Husayn in an attempt to pressure him to voluntarily withdraw his forces from Iraq and avoid a full-scale war. The embargo policy was strongly endorsed by Democrats in Washington. Although the Russians had long maintained strong ties to Iraq, even Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev tried to persuade Husayn to withdraw his forces or face military defeat.

The Bush Administration made it clear to Husayn that he was on a tight deadline, and that any failure to meet that deadline and withdraw his forces would result in war. The first anti-war coalition, the National Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, strongly opposed the idea of a deadline and advocated the extension of the sanctions policy against Iraq as an alternative to military action. The National Campaign also made it clear that no matter how much it was opposed to a war against Iraq, it also considered Husayn's invasion of Kuwait to be an undeniable act of aggression.

The National Campaign's stance on the Gulf War was challenged by a rival organization, the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East. The National Coalition bitterly opposed the National Campaign's support for the extension of sanctions. The Coalition argued that Iraq itself was the victim of "U.S. Oil Imperialism," which was working in cahoots with reactionary states like Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the ruling class of Kuwait itself. The Coalition demanded, instead, that the Left uncritically defend "the Iraqi people" against both continued economic sanctions and direct American military intervention. The divisions inside the Left over this issue became so deep that both groups were forced to hold rival rallies in Washington in January 1991.

The hard Left National Coalition came out of a long-standing Workers World Party front organization known as the People's Anti-War Mobilization (PAM), which quickly reorganized itself into the National Coalition. The WWP's prominent role in the National Coalition was made evident by the group's choice of a leader, a WWP member named Monica Moorhead (the WWP's candidate for President in the 2000 elections). The Coalition's office was adjacent to Clark's Manhattan law office, where another WWP cadre member

THE IAC AND THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST SANCTIONS: HELPING THE IRAQI PEOPLE OR SADDAM HUSAYN

One of the IAC's best-known campaigns is aimed at lifting all economic sanctions against Iraq. By raising this issue, the IAC is trying to appeal to many people who have no sympathy for Iraq but who are rightly concerned that the way sanctions are currently imposed only ends up punishing ordinary Iraqis, particularly children, who are deprived of food and medicine while the ruling elite remains unharmed. UN agencies involved with Iraq believe that as a result of the way the sanctions policy has been implemented, thousands of innocent Iraqi civilians are needlessly dying every month. The sanctions policy has also been seized upon by Saddam Husayn to generate sympathy for Iraq, both in the West and especially within the Muslim world. Husayn, of course, wants an end to *all* sanctions so that he can go about rebuilding his war machine. From his point of view, humanitarian concerns about sanctions serve as a perfect "wedge" issue to force an end to *any* UN-imposed restrictions on Iraq's sovereignty, restrictions that were heightened after he violated his promise to allow UN inspectors to freely examine potential nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare sites on Iraqi soil.

In an attempt to rectify the injustices caused by sanctions, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell appeared on March 7th, 2001 before the House International Relations Committee to argue for "humane, smart sanctions" that "target Saddam Hussein not the Iraqi people." A similar view was reflected in a report on Iraq from the Fourth Freedom Foundation authored by David Cortright, a former executive director of the anti-war group SANE. Cortright proposes a revised sanctions policy that specifically targets Husayn's ability to use Iraqi oil revenue to either build or import weapons and "dual use" goods while letting commercial companies, not the UN, be responsible for certifying and providing notification of civilian imports into Iraq. The proposal would also permit the ordering and contracting of civilian goods on an "as-required basis" to overcome cumbersome UN regulations.

While by no means perfect, Powell's support for "smart sanctions" met with enormous resistance from both Congress and the Pentagon, both of whom fear being seen as overly "soft" on Iraq. Given this political reality, one would have thought that the IAC might have given at least some of Powell's or Cortright's proposals a degree of critical support, since they would materially improve the conditions of ordinary Iraqis - something the IAC itself claims to be so concerned about - as well as open up a broader discussion of the sanctions issue. Yet in a March 20th statement, Richard Becker, the IAC's "Western Regional Coordinator" (and a leading member of the WWP), denounced smart sanctions as a "poisonous fraud," claimed that smart sanctions were a form of colonialism, and renewed the IAC's demand "to unconditionally lift the genocidal sanctions against Iraq" which, coincidentally enough, is exactly what Saddam Husayn himself would like so that he can rebuild his military machine. The manipulation of the Iraq sanctions issue by the far left for its own political goals may have hurt the campaign against sanctions, according to Scott Ritter. Ritter, a former Marine Captain who led the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) disarmament team in Iraq for seven years, is today a leading advocate of ending the type of sanctions that only hurt the Iraqi people. In an interview with Ali Asadullah (available from iviews.com) that appeared on February 2nd, 2000, Ritter stated that one of the problems which genuine sanction critics have been taken seriously is that the issue "has been embraced by, I would say, the fringe left of the United States. . . Because the issue has been embraced by the left - including radical elements of the left - it's lost a little bit of its political credibility." Due to the fringe left's radical beliefs, "virtually all of what they say [about Iraq] is wrong, factually; or heavily slanted with a political ideology that most of Americans don't find attractive." When one fringe left group claimed that American policy in Iraq was equivalent to Auschwitz, Ritter told them that such a statement not only alienated people, but that "[it was] about as grossly an irresponsible statement as I can imagine. This isn't Auschwitz, this isn't genocide. . . This is a horrible policy that's resulting in hundreds of thousands of dead kids. But there's a big difference between the two." Ritter also said that it was almost impossible to get a legitimate debate in the U.S. about sanctions because while one side "demonizes" Iraq, the opposition views "the regime as some sort of nice little genteel Middle East nation."

When specifically asked about Ramsey Clark, Ritter replied: "I wouldn't be in

touch with Ramsey Clark. . . I fought in the Gulf War. I was in that war. I know what went on during that war, and we're not war criminals. I'm not a war criminal. And none of the people I served with are war criminals. And yet he's accusing the U.S. of committing war crimes because A-10 aircraft fired depleted uranium shells at Iraqi tanks. That's horribly irresponsible. I don't want to be associated with that man. That's the kind of thing I'm talking about. He may have a point when it comes to economic sanctions, but he hasn't a clue of what's involved in modern warfare and why we targeted certain targets. . . He's grossly irresponsible in some of the things he says." Apparently, Saddam Husayn disagrees with Ritter's assessment of Clark. Otherwise why would he continue to welcome Ramsey Clark-led IAC delegations to Baghdad year after year with open arms?

named Gavriella Gemma (Coalition Coordinator) worked as a legal secretary. The National Coalition (most likely through Gemma) extended an invitation to Clark to serve as its official spokesman. To the astonishment of many, he accepted. Yet Clark and the WWP, at least publicly, had so little in common that as late as 1989 the WWP's official mouthpiece, *Workers World* (WW), never even mentioned Clark in a favorable light.

Clark's decision paved the way for his subsequent involvement in the WWP-allied International Action Center. After the Gulf War ended, Clark established an "International War Crimes Tribunal" to denounce U.S. actions against Iraq. When the Tribunal held its first hearings in New York on May 11th, 1991, the speakers included WWP members Teresa Gutierrez ("co-coordinator" of yet another WWP front, the International Peace for Cuba Appeal), Moorhead, and WWP stalwart Sarah Flounders. One year later, on July 6th, 1992, *Workers World* announced the creation of a "center for international solidarity" (the IAC) with Clark as its spokesman. Clark told WW that "the international center can become a people's United Nations based on grass-roots activism and the principles of peace, equality and justice." With Clark as spokesman and Sarah Flounders as a coordinator, the IAC sheltered a myriad of WWP front groups and allied organizations, including the National Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, the Haiti Commission, the Campaign to Stop Settlements in Occupied Palestine, the Commission of Inquiry on the US Invasion of Panama, the Movement for a Peoples Assembly, and the International War Crimes Tribunal.

From 1991 until today, the IAC/WWP has led repeated delegations to Iraq with Clark at their head to meet with Saddam Husayn and other top Iraqi officials. The close ties between the IAC and Husayn have led other critics of U.S. foreign policy toward Iraq, such as former UN inspector Scott Ritter (who, like the IAC, opposes the continuation of sanctions as being

far more harmful to the Iraqi people than to Husayn), to distance himself from any association with the IAC. Ironically enough, a few years before the Gulf War broke out, the WWP had no qualms about labeling Saddam Husayn as a genocidal war criminal. In a September 22nd, 1988 WW article entitled "Iraq launches genocidal attack on Kurdish people," WWP cadre (and current IAC honcho) Brian Becker denounced Iraq's "horrific chemical weapons attacks on Kurdish villages," citing "ample evidence" from Kurdish sources and "independent observers" that "mustard gas, cyanide and other outlawed chemical weapons have been used in a massive fashion" not just against the Kurds but also against "thousands of rebelling Iraqi forces who deserted from the army in 1984 during the Iran-Iraq war, and took refuge in the marshland areas in southern Iraq." Becker then noted that the Iraqi attempt to crush the Kurds "by a combination of terror and systematic depopulation" has been "the hallmark of the government's policy for the last several years."

More recently both Clark and the IAC have played a leading role in uncritically defending former Serbian leader Slobodon Milosevic's brutal attempts to dominate both Bosnia and Kosovo. (Clark even defended Radovan Karadzic, the notorious Bosnian Serb warlord allied with Milosevic, against a civil suit brought against him for the atrocities carried out by his forces.) While accusing NATO of committing war crimes against Serbia, neither the IAC nor the WWP criticized Serbia's notorious record of terror against civilians, one which includes both the infamous massacre at Srebrenica and the displacement of a million Muslim refugees from Kosovo. The Clark/IAC War Crimes Tribunal's hatred of American policy, which comes coated in legal jargon, borders on the comic as well as the megalomaniacal. One IAC "legal brief," for example, accuses President Clinton, the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and "U.S. personnel directly involved in designating targets,

flight crews and deck crews of the U.S. military bombers and assault aircraft, U.S. military personnel directly involved in targeting, preparing and launching missiles at Yugoslavia" with war crimes. Nor does the IAC indictment ignore the political and military leadership of England, Germany, and "every NATO country," not to mention the governments of Turkey and Hungary. It then charges NATO with "inflicting, inciting and enhancing violence between Muslims and Slavs," using the media "to demonize Yugoslavia, Slavs, Serbs and Muslims as genocidal murderers," and "attempting to destroy the Sovereignty, right to self determination, democracy and culture of the Slavic, Muslim, Christian and other people of Yugoslavia." The Alice in Wonderland quality of the "war crimes indictment" is further highlighted by its demand for "the abolition of NATO!"

No matter how surreal the IAC's actions sound, there can be little doubt that they are well-funded, since IAC/WWP cadres regularly fly to Europe and the Middle East to attend conferences and political meetings. Through a 501(c) 3 organization called the People's Rights Fund, a wealthy Serbian-American who may even have business connections to Belgrade can freely donate to both the IAC and its related media propaganda arm, the Peoples Video Network. Nor are foreign diplomats terribly shy about being publicly associated with IAC events. Iraq's UN Ambassador, Dr. Sa'id Hasan, for example, even spoke at the IAC's "First Hearing of the Independent Commission of Inquiry to Investigate U.S./NATO War Crimes Against the People of Yugoslavia," held in New York City on July 31st, 1999. One foreign official who will *not* be attending any IAC conferences in the near future, however, is former Yugoslav leader Slobodon Milosevic, who is currently on trial for war crimes in the Hague.

PART TWO: THE CRISIS OF THE MARXIST LEFT AND THE RISE OF THE WWP

Although Ramsey Clark greatly contributed to the IAC's credibility with respect to the outside world, the emergence of the WWP inside the American radical movement essentially stems from resistance inside the U.S. Left to the radical changes in the Soviet Union begun by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Gorbachev's attempts to reform the Soviet system sent a shockwave throughout the

American Left not unlike that which had followed the partial revelations of Stalin's crimes in the famous 1956 20th Party Congress of the CPSU. Gorbachev's new policies bitterly split the American Communist Party (CPUSA), whose aging leadership clearly opposed the new turn. The CPUSA crack-up also had a profoundly disorienting effect on many of the "peace" fronts long associated with the party, as well as on its fellow travelers inside the "Rainbow Coalition"/Jessie Jackson wing of the Democratic Party.

Starting in the 1960s (when it played a major role in organizing anti-Vietnam peace demonstrations), the CPUSA managed to establish cooperative relationships with left/liberal groups like the National Commission for a Sane Nuclear Policy (SANE), the War Resisters League, the American Friends Service Committee, Women's Strike for Peace, sections of the labor movement and the peace, civil rights, "social justice" and social gospel groups associated with the National Council of Churches; all of whom helped form the base of the "progressive" wing of the Democratic Party. When dealing with Democrats and left-liberals along "Popular Front" lines, the CPUSA carefully avoided spouting radical dogma even as its sister parties in Moscow and Havana encouraged Marxist-led revolutions in the Third World. While the CP extended its influence into left-liberal circles, particularly during the Reagan years, party "hardliners" rested content in the knowledge that the more clout the CPUSA had inside the Democratic Party and its allied constituent groupings, the less likely the Reagan Administration would be able to generate the political will needed to use military force against revolutionary regimes and movements throughout the Third World. Needless to say, this "two tier" approach met with Moscow's full approval.

All that changed with the shift of Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev. Hardliners were infuriated with Gorbachev's decision to end Russian support to its client states in Eastern Europe. Many of these regimes were run by ideological hardliners willing to devote considerable resources to encouraging insurgent Marxist movements in the Third World. Not surprisingly, party bosses in regimes like East Germany (whose hold on power was ultimately based on Soviet military might) now became Gorbachev's harshest critics. Gorbachev's decision to distance the Soviet Union from Cuba also dealt a serious blow to Cuban-allied insurgency movements throughout both Central and

"ANSWER" AND THE "POD PEOPLE"

The IAC/WWP's new group, International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War & End Racism), coordinated the September 29th protests in Washington and San Francisco that drew close to 20,000 participants. ANSWER is now calling for renewed nationwide anti-war actions on October 27th.

There can be little doubt about ANSWER's ties to the WWP. ANSWER's September 23rd press release, for example, listed as "press contacts" Richard Becker and Sarah Sloan. A director of the West Coast IAC, Becker was one of the WWP leaders chosen to give a presentation honoring the memory of the WWP's founder, Sam Marcy. As for Sarah Sloan, "Youth Coordinator for ANSWER," she is also the "Youth Coordinator" for the IAC. Wearing her WWP hat, Sloan gave a presentation on the evils of capitalism at a WWP conference held at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology on December 2nd and 3rd, 2000. Teresa Gutierrez, another ANSWER leader, a speaker at the September 29th Washington demo and the "Co-Director, IAC," is further described in an ANSWER press release as the "co-chairperson of the National Committee to Return Elian Gonzalez to Cuba, and [as] a coordinator of the International Peace for Cuba Appeal." Unmentioned in the press release is the fact that Gutierrez is also a long-standing WWP leader who, in her March 14th, 1998 speech at a WWP memorial to Sam Marcy held in New York, gushed, "As a lesbian, as a Latina, as a woman and as a worker, I feel compelled today to express my utmost gratitude to this man [Marcy]." Yet another ANSWER statement came from one Brian Becker (not to be confused with Richard Becker), a "Co-Director of the International Action Center," national coordinator of the January 20th, 2001 "Counter-Inaugural Protest" in Washington, D.C., and "a frequent commentator on Fox TV." In the WWP paper *Workers World*, Brian Becker is identified as a member of the WWP's Secretariat.

The WWP/IAC/ANSWER network is now pushing its own paranoid Marxoid line on the war by claiming that U.S.-led military actions against 'Usamah ibn Ladin and other Islamist terrorists is really part of a U.S. imperialist plot. An IAC statement on the current crisis begins: "As the U.S.-led bombing campaign against the people of Afghanistan continues and civilian casualties mount, the International Action Center condemns in the strongest terms this latest terror bombing of a civilian population." Of course, only the most hardened leftist ideologue (or Muslim extremist) could believe that the U.S. attack in Afghanistan is a "terror bombing" campaign that is intentionally directed at Afghanistan's "civilian population" and not at the Taliban. The IAC statement then calls for opposition to "this imperialist war" and concocts a conspiracy theory blaming the "U.S. military-oil complex" for using the 9/11 attack as "a cynical opportunity" to beat its "rivals in Germany and Russia, for the oil resources of the former Soviet Union," thereby ignoring the obvious fact that both Germany and Russia completely support U.S. actions against Islamist terrorist fanatics.

Given the sheer crudeness of the WWP and its allied organizations, one would have thought that the "capitalist imperialist" press would play a key role in exposing the WWP's central role in both the IAC and ANSWER. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Indeed, ANSWER itself reprints reports from both Reuters and the *Washington Post* about the Washington protests that treat both the IAC and ANSWER as if they were perfectly legitimate groups. CNN's C-SPAN even covered the September 29th Washington demonstration in its entirety. Until now, virtually nothing has been written about the IAC/WWP, even in the upscale left/liberal press - with two notable exceptions. The first was John Judis' article on Ramsey Clark for the April 22th, 1991 issue of the *New Republic*. More recently, *The Nation* magazine's UN correspondent Ian Williams wrote a June 21st, 1999 article for *Salon* entitled "Ramsey Clark, the war criminal's best friend," which comments on the IAC/WWP.

Outside of these two articles, in order to find any real commentary on the IAC and WWP, one has to turn to the left sectarian and anarchist press. Perhaps the most detailed article dealing with Ramsey Clark, the IAC, and the WWP appeared in the Lower East Side New York-anarchist journal *The Shadow* a few years ago, in an article by Manny Goldstein entitled "The Mysterious Ramsey Clark: Stalinist Dupe or Ruling-Class Spook?" (to which one is tempted to add "or Flat-Out Kook"). This article has recently been widely circulated on the Internet. Self-described "council communist" Lefty Hooligan has also exposed the WWP/IAC in the punk rock publication *Maximum RocknRoll*. In his February 1998 *MRR* column, for example, Hooligan commented on longtime WWP honcho Gloria LaRiva, whose "handcuffs-and-night-

stick Leftism is also evident in her unapologetic support for Saddam Hussein's brutality." (This is the same Gloria LaRiva who, according to a report in the August 9th, 1990 *Workers World*, told a San Francisco audience that "Cuba is far more democratic than the U.S.") Hooligan's remarks, however, did not prevent *MRR* from later running a virtual press release from the IAC attacking American perfidy in its misnamed "News" section.

The WWP/IAC connection has also been repeatedly exposed by the WWP's rivals in the fringe Trotskyist movement, most notably in the Spartacist League paper *Workers Vanguard*, which in its September 28th, 2001 issue casually refers to the "Stalinoid Workers World Party" as well as the "WWP's International Action Center" without further elaboration, presumably since the WWP's role in the IAC is already so well known to fringe leftists. The April-May 1999 issue of *The Internationalist* (from yet another Trotskyist splinter group) devotes an entire page to attacking the WWP and "its creation the International Action Center" for serving as a "leftist front for reactionary Serbian nationalist politics." The WWP's presence inside the IAC is equally transparent to European leftists like Max Böhnell, a writer for the German Communist paper *Neues Deutschland*. In describing the IAC in a June 23rd, 1999 article, he wrote: "Hinter dem IAC steht die 'Workers World Party' (WWP), die den langsamen Zusammenbruch der US-Restlinken bemerkenswert gut überstanden hat." ["Behind the IAC stands the Workers World Party, which has withstood the gradual collapse of the remaining US left remarkably well."] *Neues Deutschland* then points out that both Ramsey Clark and the WWP have even come under criticism from other leftists because of their lack of criticism ["wegen mangelnder Kritik"] for the governments of Iraq and Yugoslavia.

Even activists on the libertarian/isolationist right like Justin Raimondo of antiwar.com have noticed the heavy hand of the WWP. In a July 2nd, 2001 column, Raimondo pointed out that Ramsey Clark "is nothing if not a walking stereotype, ever since he joined up with the Workers World Party cult that runs his 'International Action Center.'" Raimondo then continues: "The WWP pod people, having taken over the body of an ex-U.S. Attorney General, use Clark as a front to push their own zealous defense of virtually every tyrant on earth, from Saddam Hussein to the black 'anti-imperialist' militias of Rwanda, to Slobadan Milosevic." After describing Clark as "positively spooky," Raimondo notes that the IAC "not only defends tyrants against US intervention - it glorifies them as heroic fighters for 'socialism.'"

Of course it should be pointed out that the WWP's radical critics themselves often promote views that are almost as wacky as those of the WWP. Nonetheless, up until now it has primarily been voices from the fringe left that have pointed out the ties between the IAC and WWP, ties that are utterly transparent to anyone with even the slightest knowledge of the Left, but which appear to be utterly opaque to big "capitalist" media outlets like Reuters, the *Washington Post*, and CNN.

Latin America. Since the romanticization of the Cuban Revolution, combined with Cuban military aid to the Sandinistas and the deployment of Cuban troops to help the government of Angola in its war against Jonas Savimbi's União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA, a brutal South African-, U.S.-, and Chinese-backed opposition movement) had led many American leftists into the Soviet camp in the first place, Gorbachev's actions against Cuba came as a particularly bitter blow. The crisis inside the Soviet-allied Left became even more pronounced after Saddam Husayn's invasion of Kuwait, when Soviet foreign policy began to tilt more towards Washington than Moscow's longtime ally Baghdad.

In the midst of this larger crisis over Gorbachev and Iraq, the WWP became the first avowedly left sect more or less ideologically allied with Moscow to offer its

unconditional support to Saddam Husayn as a victim of "U.S. imperialism," while it attacked Gorbachev as "a counterrevolutionary" (if not a CIA agent). Until 1988 Sam Marcy, the WWP's three-decades long undisputed leader and theoretical guru, had taken a relatively benign view of Gorbachev, glasnost and perestroika. By the fall of 1988, however, Marcy had decided that Gorbachev's decision to embrace both market reforms and political accommodation with the West was an unmitigated disaster. In a February 10th, 1989 forum on Soviet policy that included a spokesman from the Communist Party, the Soviet UN Mission, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the African National Congress, and the now-defunct Line of March grouping, WWP spokesman Larry Holmes confessed to being "worried by perestroika" and other ideas advanced "to justify policies that seem to be alien to

socialism." On September 29th, 1989, the WWP convened an "emergency conference" (entitled "In Defense of Socialism") to unify the party around the new anti-Gorbachev line. A few weeks later, in late October 1989, the WWP National Committee met to discuss Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's October 23rd speech to the Supreme Soviet, in which Shevardnadze announced that the Soviet Union had decided to disengage from Eastern Europe. The meeting ended with the WWP sending out "messages of solidarity" to the Communist Parties of East Germany and Czechoslovakia, according to a report in the November 9th, 1989 *WW*. Nor did the WWP shy away from publicly defending Romania's Dracula-like dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, whom the WWP worked vigorously (but with little success) to turn from monster to mensch inside the pages of *Workers World*.

The WWP was equally consistent when it came to Asia. The sect even applauded the brutal Chinese repression of pro-democracy students and workers at Tiananmen Square. In the April 12th, 1990 *WW*, Sara Flounders (currently a leader of the "human rights" organization IAC), wrote: "Now the significance of the suppression of the right-wing movement in Tiananmen Square" could be seen from a "clearer perspective"; namely, that China had "smashed the plot of international anti-China forces to subvert the legal government and the socialist system of China." How did Flounders know this to be true? Because Chinese Premier Li Peng said so in a March 20th speech to the National Peoples Congress in Beijing.

The WWP's public opposition to Gorbachev made it a potential vehicle for hard Left elements then trying to construct their own line independent of Moscow. Left stars like famed radical lawyer William Kunstler openly endorsed the WWP line on Gorbachev in his blurbs for Sam Marcy's April 1990 book *Perestroika: A Marxist Critique* (essentially a compilation of his articles written for *WW*). Spurred on by the favorable response, the WWP intensified its attack. A September 8th, 1991 *WW* editorial even claimed that the introduction of capitalism into Eastern Europe "has been a tyranny as bad as any terror." On September 28-29th, 1991, the WWP held an "emergency conference" in New York "in response to the Gorbachev-Yeltsin takeover" in Russia. According to an article in the October 10th, 1991 *WW*, "over 45 comrades" spoke on an open microphone at the conference about the "counterrevo-

lutionary" events in Russia and - surprise, surprise - "not one of them found cause to oppose the party's analysis." One WWP'er even expressed pleasure about the way that China had "stopped in Tiananmen Square" the "so-called democracy movement," while another praised the former East Germany as "a haven for gay liberation"!

PART THREE: STEALTH TROTSKYISM AND THE MYSTERY OF THE WWP

One of the many ironies of the IAC/WWP story is that a group now aligned with some of the most dogmatic elements in what's left of the Left is itself most likely run by secret Trotskyists. Given the hermit-like quality of the WWP, it's hard to know for sure. Even accurate estimates of the group's members are hard to come by. In the 1980s most conventional estimates were that it had somewhere between three and four hundred followers. Thanks to the IAC in particular, the WWP's recruiting efforts over the past decade have met with some success, especially in New York and San Francisco. If both actual WWP members and fellow travelers are counted, the group may now deploy up to a thousand cadres, if not more.

Insofar as the WWP has had difficulty in recruiting, it may be due in part to the extremely closed and clannish nature of its leadership. Nowhere is this fact more evident than when it comes to discussing the group's origin. For some reason the WWP exercises great circumspection when it comes to acknowledging its origins as a faction inside the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The WWP's leaders even obscure their background to their own members. In the May 6th, 1986 WW, for example, the paper began a lengthy four-part series ostensibly dedicated to explaining the WWP's history. Not once in the entire series was it ever mentioned that the WWP first emerged out of the Socialist Workers Party or that the group's founders had spent over a decade as a faction inside the SWP. Yet the WWP's analysis of the Soviet Union strongly suggests that the sect never abandoned the worldview that its founding leaders first acquired while still inside the SWP. This issue, however, remains so sensitive that following the death of WWP founder Sam Marcy on February 1st, 1998, not one WWP memorial speech mentioned that Marcy had ever been in the SWP, much less a former

THE WWP: FROM KIM IL SUNG'S BIRTHDAY PARTY TO THE RUSSIAN "RED-BROWN ALLIANCE"

The Orwellian absurdity that is the WWP reaches its summit with the group's well-known love for that well-known bastion of human rights and free thought, North Korea. Longtime WWP leader Deirdre Griswold captured the sect's admiration for the world's last remaining Stalinist state when she wrote as follows in the April 20th, 2000 *Workers World*: "In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - the socialist north of the divided land - no date is more important than April 15, the birthday of Kim Il Sung. . . this year as Koreans celebrate Kim Il Sung's birthday - and in the U.S.-occupied south, where such actions must be taken in secret because of repressive 'national security' laws - they will also be telling the world that they are proud of and confident in their new leader, Kim Jong Il [Kim Il Sung's son and heir - KC], who is following in the socialist footsteps of Kim Il Sung." A frequent visitor to North Korea, Griswold regularly goes into fits of literary rapture when relating her experiences in the North. Her December 22nd, 1986 WW report on her visit to Pyongyang (entitled "A visit to People's Korea where there is housing for all") begins "What a success story!" She then describes a nation where there is "no homelessness, no hunger, no poverty." The fact that North Korea is one of the poorest countries in the world and that North Korea's population faces the threat of famine on a regular basis has somehow escaped Griswold's notice.

Ever since its beginnings as the Global Class War tendency inside the SWP, Sam Marcy's clique has regularly singled out North Korea for special admiration. The WWP's direct "party to party" relations with the North, however, only began to blossom fully after the WWP started attacking Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The WWP's big break came in May 1990, when the first official WWP delegation headed by Marcy visited North Korea "for 12 days in May" at the invitation of the Central Committee of the Workers Party of Korea. While in Pyongyang, the WWP delegates "had the great honor of meeting and exchanging views with Kim Il Sung." The June 7th, 1990 issue of WW even included a photo op of the WWP delegates with their North Korean friends, including Kim Il Sung, who stood in the center of the photo flanked by Marcy and Griswold.

In April 1992 another U.S. delegation led by Marcy that included Sue Bailey (a WWP'er who heads the "U.S. Out of South Korea Committee"), as well as delegates from the CPUSA, the SWP, and the American Democratic Lawyers Association, again visited North Korea to attend a "Joint Meeting of Parties, Governments, National and International Organizations" organized by CILRECO, an organization that "promotes solidarity with the Korean people." (As the official leader of the U.S. group, Marcy received the North Korean equivalent of a papal blessing.) The Americans, along with delegates from 130 other countries, traveled to the North "to attend mass public celebrations of the 80th birthday" of Kim Il Sung, according to a report in an April 1992 issue of WW by Sue Bailey and Key Martin datelined Pyongyang.

While in the North for Kim's birthday party, the WWP entered into discussions with other hardline Communists groups, including a Stalin-worshipping sect called the Russian Communist Workers Party (RCWP) (Rossiskaia Kommunisticheskaja Rabochaia Partiiia, or RKRP), which emerged from the anti-Gorbachev, "anti-revisionist" Movement of Communist Initiative in November 1991. On September 3rd, 1992, WW ran an article by Viktor Tyulkin, the group's top leader and the Secretary of its Central Committee. The introduction to the article explained that Tyulkin and Marcy had first met in Pyongyang during the April festivities for Kim "and [had] discussed the political situation in the USSR and the U.S." They remained in contact, and on Marcy's 85th birthday Tyulkin sent him a "message of solidarity" from the RCWP that was reprinted in the October 17th, 1996 WW. Tyulkin's comrade Victor Anpilov from the Executive Committee of Working Russia also enclosed his own message of solidarity.

Although the RCWP doesn't receive much press coverage in WW, it seems clear that the WWP has a sympathetic view of its activities. In a January 13th, 2000 WW article on Russian politics, the RCWP was singled out for its leadership role both in the strike movement as well as inside the "Communist Workers of Russia" voting bloc. The RCWP "left" is also contrasted favorably to Gennadi Zyuganov's far larger KPRF. *Workers World's* reluctance to devote extensive press coverage to the RCWP, however, may stem from the fact that any overt alliance with the RCWP would be

rather difficult for the WWP's more naïve rank-and-file members to stomach, since the RCWP is a textbook example of a radical "left fascist" group.

The anti-globalization movement was recently confronted with the problem of the RCWP after it was learned that two RCWP members were officially invited to take part in the recent Genoa protests by the international association ATTAC (the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens, which is best known for supporting the proposed "Tobin tax" on speculative transactions.) The leftist International Solidarity with Workers in Russia (ISWoR-SITR-MCPP) group immediately alerted other anti-globalization activists that the RCWP was an extremely racist and homophobic party whose members worship Stalin, campaign against black people in general and rap music in particular, issue material calling for homosexuals to be jailed, and published a party document in 1997 that blamed Russia's economic crisis on "American imperialism and international Zionism." The group also attacked Russian President Vladimir Putin for being so close to "the Jews that he ignores true Russian 'patriots.'" According to ISWoR, the RCWP could be best described as "a pseudo-Communist anti-Semitic organization."

At the same time that the RCWP appeals to the far right, it maintains a pro-Stalin analysis of Russia that is almost identical to the one promoted by the WWP. According to the RCWP program, for example, "The RCWP completely rejects the revisionist, opportunist, traitorous line that was promoted and adhered to by the CPSU leadership from 1953-1991, which brought about the temporary collapse of the Soviet Union in a counter-revolution. The XX Congress of the CPSU (1956) was the breaking point in the history of our country and the communist movement."

Victor Anpilov, a former Soviet journalist who became co-secretary of the RCWP in 1992 (but who broke with Tyulkin in 1996-1997 over electoral strategy), also sent his greetings of solidarity to Marcy on his 85th birthday in 1996. However, if anything Anpilov is even further to the right than Tyulkin. After leaving the RCWP, he first entered into an alliance with the notorious Eduard Limonov and his Natsionalno-Bolshevistskaia Partiya (National Bolshevik Party). Today, Anpilov is promoting a new party, the CPSU Lenin-Stalin that backs Stalin's grandson as Russia's new leader.

member of the party's National Committee. The bizarre nature of the WWP's attempt to conceal its origins is only heightened by the fact that virtually everything written about the group by outside commentators notes its beginnings inside the SWP. One of the rare academic discussions of the WWP's history comes in a survey book by Robert Alexander which is aptly titled *International Trotskyism*.

The mystery of the WWP begins with Sam Marcy, who dominated the organization from its official inception in 1959 until his death at age 86 in 1998. Born in 1911 in Russia into an extremely poor Jewish family, "Comrade Sam" grew up in Brooklyn. After spending time in the CPUSA's Young Communist League (YCL), Marcy joined the SWP in either the late 1930s or 1940s. Trained as a lawyer, he served as a legal counsel and organizational secretary for a local United Paper Workers Union. During this time he met his wife Dorothy Ballan, who also came from an immigrant Russian-Jewish family. Although Ballan (who died in 1992) graduated from Hunter College with a degree in education, she joined the United Paper Workers to spread the Marxist gospel. Following traditional Left "industrial colonization" tactics, Marcy and

Ballan next moved to Buffalo and began recruiting workers in industrial plants there into the SWP. By the late 1940s, however, the anti-communist backlash that would culminate in McCarthyism made their work inside the trade union movement virtually impossible.

Despite these political setbacks, Marcy and his fellow Buffalo SWP comrades (most notably Vince Copeland) became increasingly convinced that the world had entered a new period of revolutionary class struggle, particularly following the Chinese Revolution. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 hastened the emergence of what was known in the SWP as the Marcy/Copeland "Global Class War" tendency. The Buffalo-based "global class warriors" called on the SWP to downplay its differences with Stalinist regimes and forge a joint front against "U.S. Imperialism." Global Class War's fundamental point was that the geopolitical defense of "really existing socialism" took priority over the Trotskyist argument that put a premium on promoting class struggles inside the Soviet bloc against the dominant Stalinist bureaucracy. Marcy and Copeland's position might be best described as a "semi-entrism" because although they very much wanted to court the Stalinist states, they rejected any

argument that called on Trotskyists to enter the CPUSA en masse.

What the Global Class War argument meant *in practice* became clear during the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. The SWP majority supported the uprising as a student and worker-led revolt against Stalinist oppression. The Global Class War faction, however, completely disagreed. A Trotskyist named Fred Mazelis recalled Marcy telling him in 1959 that "the Hungarian workers were hopeless counterrevolutionaries and that we should support the Stalinists in their crushing of the Hungarian workers councils." According to another former SWP'er named Tim Wohlforth, "Marcy had decided that the Hungarian Revolution was basically a Fascist uprising and that as defenders of the Soviet Union, Trotskyists had a duty to support Soviet intervention." The WWP's 1959 founding statement (reprinted in a 1959 issue of *WW* under the heading "Proletarian Left Wing of SWP Splits, Calls for Return to Road of Lenin and Trotsky") explained that while it was OK to support demands for "proletarian democracy," once the Hungarians began demanding "*bourgeois* political democracy," the correct Trotskyist policy was to support "the final intervention of the Red Army which saved Hungary from the capitalist counterrevolution." In other words, if 99.9% of the Hungarian people wanted to overthrow Russian domination and prevent Hungary from being a satrapy of Moscow, introduce a democratic parliamentary system, and adopt an economic system that worked, they were morally wrong; in contrast, the Soviet troops who shot down unarmed Hungarian student and worker protesters were morally right.

In its founding statement, the WWP also denounced the SWP's attempts to engage in coalition electoral campaigns with a group of former CP'ers (known as the "Gates faction" after its leader, John Gates) who had broken from the CPUSA after the 20th Soviet Party Congress' partial revelations about Stalin's massive crimes. According to *WW*, however, the *real* "rightwing" trend inside the Soviet Union actually began after Stalin's death with the rise of Khrushchev! The WWP's founding statement further noted that while Stalinism "may be theoretically as wrong as social democracy," social democrats were "considered *friendly* to American imperialism and the Stalinists are considered *hostile*." Ergo, Stalinism was better than social democracy.

After breaking with the SWP, the tiny WWP sought to ally itself with

pro-Stalinist and anti-Khrushchev elements still inside the CPUSA who were angry about American CP leader William Foster's refusal to openly criticize the Khrushchev "revisionists." Around the time that the WWP was created, a splinter group called the Provisional Organizing Committee to Reconstitute a Marxist-Leninist Party in the United States (POC) - better known as the "Vanguard" group - split from the CPUSA and embraced China's anti-Khrushchev, "anti-revisionist" line. Although the WWP supported the Chinese position, the Vanguard group refused all of its political overtures because they viewed the WWP as treasonous "Trotskyites"! Not long thereafter, the WWP began removing

Solzhenitsyn to Sakharov. The WWP line was that the dissidents really reflected broader "rightwing forces" percolating inside the Soviet CP itself. In a February 22nd, 1974 essay, Marcy noted that Khrushchev's "so called democratization" had "opened up a Pandora's box of bourgeois reaction, not only in the Soviet Union but even more virulently in Eastern Europe." The WWP fully supported the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, when Russian tanks crushed the Dubcek Regime and with it "Prague Spring." Needless to say, the it also fiercely opposed the Polish Solidarity movement in the 1980s.

was the Social Democratic Israeli trade union movement, did not matter. Nor did it matter that every Arab state that opposed Israel had systematically crushed all independent labor unions or that "progressive" Arab governments like Jamal `Abd al-Nasr's Egypt had a long record of employing Nazis both to train its military and security forces and to spread anti-Semitic hate propaganda throughout the Middle East. As the WW editorial explained, "The fact that many of the Arab states are still ruled by conservative or even reactionary regimes does not materially affect this position" of support, because the Arabs "are struggling against imperialism, which is the main enemy of human progress," whereas Israel "is on

AS MUCH AS THE WWP ADMIRERD CHINA, IT DESPISED ISRAEL. WWP CADRE PROUDLY CARRIED SIGNS IN SUPPORT OF AL-FATH THAT READ "ISRAEL = TOOL OF WALL STREET RULE" AND "HITLER-DAYAN, BOTH THE SAME."

Trotsky's picture along with any references to him in party publications. Now thoroughly isolated from the rest of the Left, Marcy led his little group with a strong hand. Tim Wohlforth met Marcy in 1959 at an SWP convention held at a New Jersey summer camp shortly before the Global Class War clique broke with the SWP. As Wohlforth later recalled in his memoir, *The Prophet's Children*, while at the camp he had come upon a small mass of people "moving like a swarm of bees" and deeply engaged in conversation. In the middle of the mass "was a little animated man talking nonstop" who had a "high-pitched voice" and "spoke in a completely hysterical manner." Yet Marcy's devoted followers seemed "enthralled by his performance. . . It was my first experience with true political cult followers."

From its inception, the WWP attacked any and all liberalization tendencies in Communist Bloc nations and scrambled to be first in line to applaud crackdowns on dissident movements. The April 1959 issue of WW even ran an editorial praising the brutal Chinese suppression of Tibet's independence movement. As for the Soviet Union, the WWP regularly attacked the entire spectrum of dissident thinkers from

The WWP's true love throughout the 1960s was Maoist China, with North Korea a close second. The WWP even opposed the signing of the 1963 U.S.-Soviet Test Ban Treaty because it would bar China from acquiring nuclear weapons! When the Chinese exploded their first H-bomb in 1967, WW declared it to be "a major victory for socialism." The party was particularly enthusiastic about China's disastrous "Cultural Revolution," so much so that as late as the WWP's 1986 party conference, Mao's wife Chang Ching (a Cultural Revolution enthusiast and "Gang of Four" leader) was singled out for special praise.

As much as the WWP admired China, it despised Israel. WWP cadre proudly carried signs in support of al-Fath that read "Israel = Tool of Wall Street Rule" and "Hitler-Dayan, Both the Same." A June 24th, 1967 WW editorial following the Six Day War stated that Israel "is not the state of the Jewish nation," but a state "that oppresses Jewish workers as well as Arabs." The fact that Israel was largely created by Socialist Zionists and in 1967 was led by Labor Party Premier Golda Meir (a woman - something unthinkable in the Arab world), whose political base

the side of the oppressors." This same editorial went on to assert that "When the bosses on a world scale - i.e., the imperialists - go to war with the oppressed colonial and semi-colonial nations, it makes little difference who fires the first shot, as far as the rights and wrongs of the matter are concerned. . . Naturally, the imperialists were the original aggressors in every case." Some two decades later, the WWP would use virtually identical arguments to justify supporting Saddam Husayn.

The WWP's remarkable capacity for Orwellian "double think" was by no means limited to the issue of the Soviet Union or Israel. Take gay liberation, for example. Starting in the early 1970s the WWP actively recruited many gay and lesbian followers, since paradoxically enough the group had a fairly advanced position on this issue. The sect's recruitment successes in this area came about in part because most of the other ultra-left groups competing with the WWP were orthodox Maoists who endorsed the Stalinist/Maoist line that homosexuality was a sexual perversion caused by decadent capitalism that would be swiftly cured come the revolution. Yet even though WWP cadres frequently promoted

themselves as gay or lesbian, the WWP refused to criticize the notoriously repressive practices directed against homosexuals in China, North Korea, and Cuba, much less in Serbia or Iraq.

Perhaps the ultimate absurdity of the WWP, however, is that the stealth Trotskyism of its leadership actually saved the sect from collapse in the late 1970s. In the 1960s the WWP, primarily through two key front groups, Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) and the American Servicemen's Union (ASU), managed to recruit a fair amount of new members who were drawn to the group less by its theories than by the extreme militancy of its street actions. Indeed, YAWF's one notable contribution to the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was that it was the only group which supported the Weatherman at the disastrous SDS convention in Chicago in the summer of 1969. YAWF also participated in the Weatherman-organized "Days of Rage" protest that same autumn. With the end of the Vietnam War, however, the entire American Left began to suffer an enormous downturn, and the WWP was no exception to the rule. The cadre-based Left was further weakened by the rise of new social movements like women's liberation, gay liberation, and the anti-nuclear and ecology movements, all of which operated organizationally and ideologically outside the traditional framework of orthodox Marxism, much less that of authoritarian Marxist-Leninist sects.

Faced with the challenge of widespread de-radicalization, as well as the growth of new social movements, the WWP (like many other Marxist sects) took an "industrial turn" and ordered its followers back into the labor movement. The WWP even created the Centers for United Labor Action (CULA) to help coordinate these efforts. Yet ironically, what ultimately gave the WWP a second lease on life was the death of Mao and the subsequent ideological crisis inside post-Mao China that finally resulted in the defeat of the "Gang of Four." The WWP's competitors in orthodox Maoist grouplets like the October League rapidly ran out of ideological steam as the new post-Mao Chinese leadership moved even closer to the United States. After China began aiding American and South African-backed movements like UNITA, and Chinese troops tried to invade Vietnam, orthodox Maoism became even harder to rationalize. Thanks to the WWP's stealth Trotskyism, however, the group managed to escape political oblivion by reorienting itself away from China and toward the

Soviet Bloc with relative ease.

The WWP's great advantage in the post-1977 period was that throughout its entire history it only concealed - but never abandoned - its basic Trotskyist ideology. Orthodox Maoism, it should be recalled, maintained that with the death of Stalin the Soviet Union had ceased to be socialist state. Maoists even went so far as to claim that, thanks to "Khrushchevite revisionism," the USSR had been transformed into "a social-imperialist state" not unlike Tsarist Russia. The WWP, however, completely rejected this view even while it was busily glorifying ultra-Maoist groups like China's "Gang of Four" for their revolutionary zeal. In a May 1976 WW article, for example, Marcy reasserted the Trotskyist position (naturally without identifying it as such) against the standard Maoist argument. More specifically, he rejected the idea "that there is a new exploiting class in the Soviet Union," and that there had been a "return to the bourgeoisie to power there." The reality was that the USSR still remained "a workers' state" whose "underlying social system... is infinitely superior to that of the most developed, the most 'glorious' and the most 'democratic' of the imperialist states." At the same time (again following Trotsky) he admitted that Russia had undergone "a severe strain, deterioration, and erosion of revolutionary principles, and [was] moreover headed by a privileged and absolutist bureaucracy." Marcy's later rejection of Gorbachev as a "capitalist restorationist" in the late 1980s was not all that dissimilar to Trotsky's attack on Bukharin - not Stalin - in books like *The Revolution Betrayed* as the main threat to socialism in the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

The WWP's brand of covert Trotskyism would prove crucial to its future growth. In the late 1970s, its ideology allowed the sect to attach itself like a pilot fish to Soviet and Cuban-allied organizations and avoid political annihilation either from the atrophy of its membership or from a devastating political schism. The WWP's switch from Mao's China to Brezhnev's Russia was so remarkable that in 1984 the sect, which not long before was singing the praises of the Gang of Four, now publicly endorsed Jesse Jackson for President! Finally, when the CPUSA itself split into pieces in the late 1980s, the WWP was in a position to exploit the new situation for maximum political profit.

CONCLUSION

Given the WWP's worldview, the notion

that a group as closely linked to the WWP as the International Action Center could ever be taken seriously, either as a "human rights" or "peace" organization, seems comical as well as grotesque. The all too "resistible rise" of the IAC/WWP, however, only makes sense when it is viewed in the context of the broader collapse of Soviet-style Marxism and all of its ideological variants. Left to its own devices, the WWP would have remained on the political margin as a quirky Left sect whose weirdly messianic ideology combined the worst aspects of Trotskyism, Maoism, and Stalinism into a unique and utterly foul brew. That a bizarre outfit like the WWP could become a serious player in American left-wing radicalism in the year 2001 is above all a testament to the existing ideological, intellectual, and moral bankruptcy of the broader Left, which still insists on living in a decrepit fantasy world where criminals are good, the police are evil, blacks are noble, whites are all racist, heterosexual men are sexist, all women are victims, Israel is always 100% wrong, the Palestinians are always 100% right, America is "objectively" reactionary, and America's enemies are "objectively" progressive and therefore worth defending. If this were not the case, the IAC never could or would have emerged as a serious force.

There is no reason, at least in theory, why a new movement from the Left could not both support a U.S.-led war against Islamist fanatics and fight to preserve civil liberties and social justice, both at home and abroad. The entrenched knee-jerk anti-American mindset of so many on the Left, however, makes such a development highly unlikely. At the very least, however, the rational elements within the Left should be willing to critically examine the propagandistic claims emanating from a variety of self-styled "human rights" and "anti-war" groups that are as politically compromised and morally dubious as the IAC, ANSWER, and the WWP. While the future role of the Left after 9/11 may not be clear, surely that much ought to be obvious. ☐

Kevin Coogan is the author of a crucially important study on the postwar right, *Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Fascist International* (New York: Autonomedia, 1999), as well as a regular contributor to *Hit List*. Among other things, he wrote "How 'Black' is Black Metal: Michael Moynihan, *Lords of Chaos*, and the 'Countercultural Fascist' Underground," an article which appeared in *Hit List* 1:1 (February-March 1999), pp. 32-49.

THE ALMIGHTY TOP TENS

SHITLIST

Mark DeVito

- 10) JUDAS PRIEST - "British Steel" CD
- 9) SACRIFICE - "Torment In Fire" LP
- 8) RAINBOW - "Rising" LP
- 7) ENGLISH DOGS - "Metamorphosis" EP
- 6) ILL NIÑO - "Revolution, Revolución" CD
- 5) ZERO BULLSHIT - "A Moment of Silence" CD
- 4) GANG GREEN - "King of Bands" CD
- 3) MACHINE HEAD - "The Burning Red" CD
- 2) DESTRUCTION - "The Antichrist" CD
- 1) AIDEN ANTHONY - "My Unborn Son's Heartbeat" CD

Jeff Bale

- 1) BUZZCOCKS - CD reissues of first two LPs
- 2) JEFFERSON AIRPLANE - "Ignition" 4xCD box set
- 3) MENSEN - "Delusions of Grandeur" CD
- 4) MOBY GRAPE - CD reissue of first LP
- 5) MOTIONS - "Introduction to..." CD
- 6) SAICOS - "Wild Teen Punk from Peru" 10" EP
- 7) SKIDS - "Days of Europa" CD
- 8) STATICS - 7"
- 9) TILES - "I Can't Sleep at Night" 7"

- 10) V/A - "Psychedelic States: Georgia" CD

Mitch Cardwell

- 1) GREEN DAY - live at Gilman on 9/16/01
- 2) PIRANHAS - "Dictating Machine Service" 7" EP
- 3) THE MIGHTY HANNIBAL - "Hannibalism!" CD
- 4) FLESHIES - "Kill The Dreamer's Dream" LP
- 5) THE PATTERN - "Immediately" CD EP
- 6) PAUL E. ESTER & THE CRUEL SHOES - "Eyeliner" 7" EP
- 7) TEENAGE REJECTS - "Don't Care About Anything" 7" EP
- 8) MUD CITY MANGLERS - "Tired Of Losing" 7" EP
- 9) TOKYO KNIVES - "I Keep Thinkin 'Bout You" 7" EP
- 11) TYRADES - "Detonation" 7" EP

Dave Johnson

- 1) JAWBREAKER - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy" CD
- 2) DAVE ALVIN - "Blackjack David" CD
- 3) THE PATTERN - "Immediately" CDEP
- 4) UNCLE TUPELO - "Still Feel Gone" CD

- 5) HÜSKER DÜ - "Zen Arcade" CD
- 6) FLESHIES - "Kill The Dreamer's Dream" CD
- 7) ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT - "All Systems Go 2" CD
- 8) JOHNNY CASH - "Unchained" CD
- 9) BLACK SABBATH - "Vol. 4" CD
- 10) THE BEATLES - "Rubber Soul" CD

Brett Mathews

- 1) Seeing GREEN DAY @ Gilman in the year 2001
- 2) PANIC - CDEP
- 3) CARRY ON - LP
- 4) STRIKE ANYWHERE - "Change is a Sound" CD
- 5) DS-13
- 6) BREAKER BREAKER - Live
- 7) BLACK FLAG "The First Four Years" CD
- 8) CONVERGE - "Jane Doe" CD
- 9) AMERICAN NIGHTMARE/CONVERGE Us Tour
- 10) AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

Your fearless leaders through the vast and daunting catacombs of rock 'n' roll recordings. Just so you know who to blame when you plunk down your hard earned cash on a slab of plastic; run home as fast as your little punk legs will carry you and spin it anxiously, only to find it completely, totally and indisputably sucks: Athena Dread (AD), Cyco Logic Loco (CLL), Jeremy Cool (JER), Alan Wright (AW), Tony Slug (TS), John Robb (JR) Brett Mathews (BAM), Jimi Cheetah (JC), Jeff Bale (JB), Dimitri Monroe (DJM), Ramsey Kanaan (RK), Sammy The Mick (STM) Mark DeVito (MD), Adam X (X), Mitch Cardwell (MC), Chris Jaluska (CJ) and John Cattivera (JDC)

SHITLIST

ADAM & THE ANTS

"ANTBox" 3 x CD BOX SET

90% of you only know ADAM ANT's fluffy MTV persona. As if to prove that there was so much more, Columbia has finally released this long-awaited box set. ADAM was an artist who bent and blended the most unlikely cultural themes into his quirky music and fashions, and he created a sound unlike anything else. This box set includes a booklet and 66 songs, 50 of which are unreleased demos, singles, or alternate mixes. Most of it is truly worth hearing and having. (X)
(Columbia)

AFTERTAX/RUSTY NAILS

"SPLIT EP" CD

Some real interesting stuff is going on on this disk, though it's more like upbeat indie rock than punk. Both bands have piqued my interest, though. AFTERTAX are the more interesting of the two, but I give the RUSTY NAILS lots of credit for working in their bagpipes well. (JC)
(2A/PO Box 695/Carrboro, NC 27510)

ALL

"LIVE + ONE" CD

The title refers to the fact that this new live ALL disc also comes with a live DESCENDENTS disc, though I'm not sure that the world needs yet another live ALL or DESCENDENTS record. Regardless, they are superb musicians who really fucking rock live. (RK)
(Epitaph/www.epitaph.com)

AGNOSTIC FRONT

"DEAD YUPPIES" CD

There are three things you can count on in life: death, taxes, and AGNOSTIC FRONT. These legends have once again delivered an inspiring mix of punk, Oi, and the almighty hardcore that they damn-near created so many years ago. But forget the history, this record would rule if A.F. had just started two months ago. A lesson for all those with the 'core

running through their veins. (STM)
(Epitaph/www.epitaph.com)

ANTISEEN

"THE BOYS FROM BRUTALSVILLE" CD

As rough and blistering as ever. ANTISEEN play some of the most treacherous punk rock out there. Although this isn't my favorite release by them, it does contain "Sabu", which is one of my all time favorite ANTISEEN songs. Check them out, or they will kick your ass. (JC)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)



ARMCHAIR MARTIAN/BAD ASTRONAUT

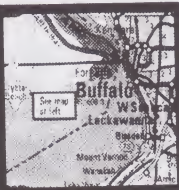
"ARMCHAIR MARTIAN VS BAD ASTRONAUT" CD

Seven tracks of the bands covering each others' songs. It sounds a little hokey, I know, but both bands are so good that it totally works. Both have that later period REPLACEMENTS/JOHN DOE/early BUFFALO TOM thing down just right. Dripping with guitars, power, and emotion. A keeper. (RK)
(Owned & Operated/PO Box 36/Fort Collins, CO 80522)

ASSAILANTS

"MODERN TECHNOLOGY" CD

THE ASSAILANTS come from Cerritos, CA. They play fast chaotic political punk rock and are really on it with their music. A lot of their songs deal with social awareness and real life happenings within the scene and the media. This record proves that another generation of young kids are keeping it strong and proud. (CLL)
(Upstart Productions/65A W. Madison Avenue #254/Dumont, NJ 07628)



AUTOMATIC HEAD DETONATOR

"BUFFALO" CD EP

This band describes their sound as "100% Cranium-Crushing, Sampledelic, Garage

Dub Techno Punk". Fair enough. But here's my description: "Drunk guys with a drum machine". (MC)
(Lo-Fi/no address listed)



AVO

"SOLUTIONS" 7"

This is some pure adrenaline pumping in your face hardcore that totally does not give a fuck! Fourteen songs "on one 7", so you can easily get the picture. AVO is great un-P.C. punk rock, and if you don't like 'em you might as well go fuck yourself! (CLL)
(Kangaroo/Middenweg 13/1098 AA Amsterdam/HOLLAND)



BACKSTABBERS

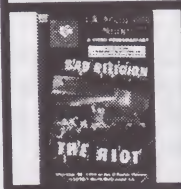
"AMERICAN TEENAGE ROCK AND ROLL" 7" EP

On a par with their Pacific Northwest contemporaries the BLACK HALOS or TIGHT BROS. The record sounds a lot dirtier than the band looks. I think that, given time, these guys might develop into something really cool. (JC)
(Fandango/1805 T Street NW #a/Washington, DC 20009)

THE BAD FORM

"NO MORE NEO NO WAVE, IT'S THE BAD FORM" 7" EP

From the awesome packaging to the primitive rock'n'roll in the grooves, this is a winner. There's some pretty damaged and destructive punk stuff here, so I'm hoping to hear more recordings by this band. Worth investigating. (MC)
(Youth Attack!/PO Box 126321/ San Diego, CA 92112)



BAD RELIGION "THE RIOT" DVD

The coolest part of this is not the actual "Riot" footage (which is cool, but limited); the coolest footage is from a show in 1988 that they included, a

blistering set of 16 tunes from the "Suffer" tour. That alone makes this DVD worth buying, and the other stuff is just icing on the cake. I could do without the bonus backstage portion, though. (JC)
(MVD/PO Box 280/Oaks, PA 19456)

BANANA ERECTORS
"FED UP WITH HIGH SCHOOL DAYS/DAGGIN' U.S.A." 7"

This band is excellent. Perfect sugary sweet Japanese girly vocals, backed by a crunchy, straightforward RAMONES-type band and sentiments. "I'm Fed Up With High School and It's Melting My Brain". Indeed. (JC)
(Sympathy For The Record Industry/
www.sympathyrecords.com)

THE BEATINGS
s/t 7" EP

These cats dig the DEAD BOYS, that's for sure. "Kiss On The Cheek" is proof of this, although they do manage to throw in some cool harmonies and back-ups to pop things up a bit. Nothing new, not perfect, but so what? - you could do a lot worse. (MC)
(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C013/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

BEERZONE
"STRANGLE ALL THE BOY BANDS" CD
This is good old-fashioned English punk rock with lots of singalong choruses. Most of the songs are mid-tempo pogo speed which reminds me a bit of ADICTS and PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES. The record is really good, and they're a great live band as well. (CLL)
(Cyclone/PO Box 810/Manchester, NH 03105)

BLERT
"FOR OBVIOUS REASONS" CD
Hopefully, these guys won't be a hidden pleasure for much longer. Remember how bands like (the original) WIRE or the MEAT PUPPETS managed to mix up experimental jams with soaring pop gems, deadpan dirges with rock anthems. Yup, BLERT are that good, not only continuing that noble tradition, but

forging ahead on their own. (RK)
(Crane
Mountain/www.cranemountain.com)

BLITZKRIEG/PARADOX U.K.
"THE RETCH FILES, VOLUME 2" CD
BLITZKRIEG and PARADOX U.K. feature the same vocalist, Spike. BLITZKRIEG Have been around off and on since 1979, and the lo-fi recording on this disc is live from 1991 and reminds me of early DISCHARGE and BROKEN BONES. PARADOX U.K. formed in 1989, and this is an studio recording of past releases and has more of an old MOTÖRHEAD feel to it. (CLL)
(Retch/njhindi.demon.co.uk/retch)



BLONDIE
s/t CD
All the BLONDIE albums have finally been reissued in great-sounding 24-bit remastered versions by their (major) label, with added bonus tracks, and this is the band's very first LP. BLONDIE were in many ways the quintessential New Wave band, with their cutesy-pie fashion sense and bouncy pop beats, but live they always sounded a lot punkier and in retrospect their debt to 60's pop melodies is even more noticeable. Herein you'll find great uptempo, organ-dominated New Wavey rockers (like "X Offender") tough-girl rockers (like "Rip Her to Shreds"), and fabulous neo-girl group numbers (like "In the Flesh"). As fresh-sounding as ever. (JB)
(Capitol)

BLOODY SODS
"4 YEARS OF BLOOD, SWEAT & BEER" CD
Now this is the real deal - a punk band with two vocalists that really tears shit up. There are 37 tracks of pure adrenaline raging punk on this CD, all from past 7" and LPs, and they are raging, pure adrenaline tunes without that crappy poppy sound. Excellent! (CLL)
(Mad Skull/PO Box 57159/1040 BB Amsterdam/HOLLAND)

REVIEWS



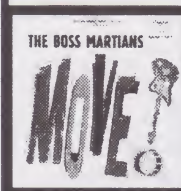
THE BLOW UP
"TRUE NOISE" CD
The BLOW UP has kicked it up a notch for their debut full-length. The title of this CD says it all. Noisy, yes.

But it's great guitar-heavy noise that's boosted by the great TIM KERR production. Fourteen killer songs and a great hidden track. (MC)
(Empty U.S./PO Box 12034/Seattle, WA 98102)



BOBBYTEENS
"YOUNG & DUMB" CD
What's not to love about the BOBBYTEENS? They've been cranking out great poppy rock'n'roll

similar to HOLLY & THE ITALIANS and NIKKI & THE CORVETTES for a while now, and this disc is a compilation of rare tracks and singles. Just Add Water has just done everyone a great favor. (MC)
(Just Add Water/PO Box 420661/San Francisco, CA 94142)



BOSS MARTIANS
"MOVE" CD
Great organ-filled surf/garage rock from Dionysus. The BOSS MARTIANS have put out a series of great

records, so you'd better add this to the list. There are a few instrumentals, some garage burners, and even some classic power pop influences, especially on "This Time Around". (MC)
(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

BOTTLES AND SKULLS
"NEVER KISS A WASP" CD
Like a cross between T.S.O.L. with MOTÖRHEAD. Dirty-ass punk bar-rock which is so aggressive that you can't help but acknowledge it - which is always the first step toward true love.

SHITLIST

Keep an eye open for their even more balls-out live show. (BAM)
(Cheetah's/cheetahsrecords.com)

BOULDER

"RIPPING CHRIST" CD

I guess these guys are trying to be black metal cuz they sure talk about Satan a lot. Unfortunately, they sound like the latest hardcore emo band from Ebullition. OK, I won't give them that much credit. I mean, how could I, with song titles like "Kick the Pregnant"? Even Satan wouldn't approve. (LD)
(Outlaw/3515 Nautilus Trail/Aurora, OH 44202)

BROKE AMERICANS

"S/T" CD

Weird! This is lame stoner metal rock crap featuring stupid stoner-type lyrics about getting laid and selling a lot of records. It's worse than BON JOVI, but very similar. The BROKE AMERICANS even changed their name from the ASSHOLES so that they would be marketable, but it's not likely that anyone will buy this. (CLL)
(Industrial Strength/3824 Regatta Blvd./Richmond, CA 94804)



BROKEN

"MAD AS FUCK" CD EP

Punk kids call them punk, HC kids call them HC, and gutter punks call them friends. This might be

the best punk band going. Fast and furious, and the title says it all. BROKEN includes ex-members of the PIST and the BALTIMORE FOOT STOMPERS. (BAM)

(Magilla Guerilla/PO Box 1271/New Haven, CT 06505)

BROKEN BONES

"WITHOUT CONSCIENCE" CD

This is a little surprising. The new BROKEN BONES CD has hardcore vocals

and fast beats, but it's really nothing like their early punk stuff. It sounds more like thrash metal, and guitarist Bones is the only original member. It starts to get pretty repetitive and boring after a while, so I'd have to say that it's disappointing. (CLL)

(High Speed/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/New York, NY 10012)



BURNSIDE

"LOSER FRIENDLY" CD

Fairly run-of-the-mill melodic SoCal stylings. Not bad, but hardly a stand-out. File under B-rated NO USE FOR A

NAME/BAD RELIGION. Actually, the last of the seven tracks consists of some fairly amusing hyper-thrash. (RK)
(Out Of Step/www.oosrecords.com)



BUZZCOCKS

"ANOTHER MUSIC IN A DIFFERENT KITCHEN" CD

What really needs to be said about the awesome first

BUZZCOCKS LP, except

that it has just been reissued (with bonus single tracks) by EMI. One of the greatest pop punk bands of all time, the Manchester lads here crank out a bunch of highly-distinctive rockers with clever lyrics, including personal faves like "No Reply", "Love Battery", "I Don't Mind", "I Need", and the extended punkadelic jam "Moving Away From the Pulsebeat", not to mention bonus cuts like "Orgasm Addict" and "What Do I Get?" (JB)
(EMI)



BUZZCOCKS

"LOVE BITES" CD

As amazing as it seems, I actually like this second BUZZCOCKS LP as much as their debut, and it too has been

recently reissued. "Love Bites" features the same winning combination of raw, wailing guitars, punchy drumming, evocative vocals, and cynical yet insightful personal lyrics, but the

band's songwriting has matured somewhat and the hooks may even be better. How could anyone complain about splendid tracks like "Ever Fallen in Love", "Nostalgia", "Sixteen Again", "Nothing Left", and "E.S.P.", or with the bonus cuts "Love You More" and "Problems"? (JB)
(EMI)



CARRY ON

"A LIFE LESS PLAGUED" CD

This CD will rip your head off. The first song is 19 seconds long, which gives you a good

taste of what's comin' your way in the next eleven songs. Loud, fast, aggressive, well-played straightedge HC with plenty of heavy dancin' parts for ya. Imagine AMERICAN NIGHTMARE meeting the GORILLA BISCUITS. Wes from AMERICAN NIGHTMARE even makes a guest appearance here. (BAM)
(Bridge 9/PO Box 990052/Boston, MA 02199)



CASUALTIES

"DIE HARDS" CD

It seems like this band likes to have their pictures taken a lot - maybe it's just a big hair thing! Anyway, this

is like most of their previous records, fast and chaotic punk rock with lots of back-up singalongs. A good solid release for all CASUALTIES fans, but c'mon guys — we already know what you look like. (CLL)

(Side One Dummy/6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211/Hollywood, CA 90028)

CELLOPHANE SUCKERS

"TOO MUCH TEMPTATION" LP

Great sounding punk from Germany that reminds me of NEW BOMB TURKS, which is always a good sign. The songs are about topics like drinking, oral sex, and puking, and I like the song about puking the best. I feel sick. (MC)
(Radio Blast/PO Box 160 308/40566 Düsseldorf/GERMANY)

REVIEWS

CHAMPION

"COME OUT SWINGING" CD

Ahhh Seattle, fertile ground of posi-sXe. While most of the '88 revival tends to recycle

the most generic aspects of youth crew hardcore, CHAMPION boasts a refreshing originality. Powerful, positive, and thoughtfully-crafted. This represents the purest essence of edge hardcore, so mosh, kids, mosh. (STM) (PHYTE/PO Box 90363/Washington, DC 20090)

CHARGE 69

"APPARENCE JUGÉE" LP

The record label is out of Germany, but this band is French. There's no other info on this release, but they play some really good mid-tempo punk rock and add a bit of reggae and ska as well. At times they sound a lot like OXYMORON, which is really cool, and there are fifteen songs on this LP. (CLL) (Knock Out/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)

CHARGE 69

"REGION SACRIFICE" LP

This CHARGE 69 release is 45 speed on a 12 inch. It contains some really good pogo punk rock. They have a few fast songs, as well as some slower mid-tempo stuff on here. Another really good record. (CLL) (Knockout/Postfach 100716/46527 Dinslaken/GERMANY)



THE CLAP

"DON'T SAY NO" 7" EP

Another "Killed By Death" single getting the legit reissue treatment. They live up to their "savage

American punk" billing, but there's more than a hint of inspiration from UK punk here. Even so, fans/obsessive collectors of "KBD" stuff should grab this for a quick fix. (MC) (Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

CONVERGE

"JANE DOE" CD

There are six million and seventy-five horrible metalcore bands around Today, and a case could be made that it's all CONVERGE's fault. We should forgive them, though, because they're still the best when it comes to throwing down the noise. These are sounds for the Armageddon, my friend — or else for a really good bout of self-mutilation. The apex of sonic bedlam. (STM) (Equal Vision/www.equalvision.com)

CRAIGUMS

"LOVE SONGS" CD

A wonderfully entertaining CD. CRAIGUMS is like the WEIRD AL YANKOVIC of punk rock. I have listened to this one several times over, and I still crack up every time. Fans of YOUR MOTHER and ALL YOU CAN EAT will definitely dig this. (JC) (Craigums/PO Box 623/Pleasanton, CA 94566)



C*NTS

"OH NO, IT'S THE C*NTS" CD

A bunch of old guys playing punky rock songs. With song titles like "I Was Born In A

Crack House", you'd think that these folks were closer to their 20s than their 50s. They're basically just having fun with dirty rock'n'roll, and sound a little like JIM CARROLL. (MC) (Disturbing/3238 S. Racine/Chicago, IL 60608)



DAMNED

"GRAVE DISORDER" CD

A brand spanking new DAMNED disc, featuring originals Dave Vanian and Captain Sensible. After some pretty sad

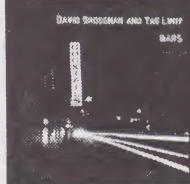
recent efforts, this is definitely a return to form that's very much reminiscent of, well, the DAMNED in the glory days of "The Black Album" and "Strawberries". An engaging cocktail of driving punk, psychedelic pop, and melody aplenty. Dave Vanian still has an incredibly rich,

distinctive, voice, and the band can still write a catchy song or two. (RK) (Nitro)

DANDARE

"PACK OF SHEEP" CD

DANDARE hail from Groningen in Holland, and this CD packs a brutal hardcore punch. There's lots of energy and tough vocals, and songs like "Don't Fuck With Me" and "Get Out Of My Face" are intense. They play really fast pissed-off sounding punk, then mix in a lot of hardcore breakdowns in between. Killer stuff! (CLL) (Dandare/J.H. Jansenstraat 10A/9713 HV Groningen/HOLLAND)



DAVID GROSSMAN & THE LIMIT

"BARS" CD

Incredibly boring hard rock/bar-rock. The guy has a much too wimpy voice to pull off this

kind of shit. My guess is that as long as they have a bar to play at, these guys will be happy. Maybe you have to be there. (MC)

(Stump/PO Box 38174/Phoenix, AZ 85029)



DEAD KENNEDYS

"BEDTIME FOR DEMOCRACY" CD

The recent lawsuit against Jello Biafra was won by East Bay and the rest of the

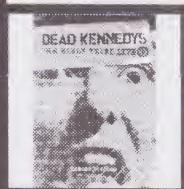
band members, so this final DEAD KENNEDYS album has finally been digitally remastered and released on another label. This is a great record, no doubt about it, so it's a must have if you don't already own it. (CLL) (Decay/PO Box 11399/Oakland, CA 94611)

DEAD KENNEDYS

"THE EARLY YEARS" DVD

This is a reissue of the Target video

SHITLIST



from 1987. It was cool then, and it's still cool now. There's lots of great live footage, mostly from the Mab in the 1978-80 era. Plus, it contains live in the Target studio videos and cool snippets of news reports from when Jello was running for mayor of San Francisco. An essential document of one of the greatest punk bands ever. (JC) (Target-MVD/PO Box 280/Oaks, PA 19456)



DEAD KENNEDYS
"GIVE ME CONVENIENCE OR GIVE ME DEATH" CD

I don't pretend to know who's right or wrong in the whole legal mess surrounding this band, but somehow it doesn't feel right without the Alternative Tentacles logo. Call me old fashioned. Anyway, this CD is a "Greatest Hits"/singles comp which does indeed contain some of their best material, which I'm sure you already know. (MC) (Manifesto/www.manifesto.com)



DEAD KENNEDYS
"MUTINY ON THE BAY" CD

Finally, we have some DEAD KENNEDYS live recordings that are officially released.

Although this doesn't top my old "Skateboard Party" LP, it's still pretty cool to listen to. The DK's are one of my favorite bands of all time and a huge reason that I started listening to punk at all back in the early 1980s. The recordings contained herein are good, but over half of this material is drawn from 1986 recordings and therefore doesn't represent the band at their peak. (JC) (Decay/PO Box 11399/Oakland, CA 94611)



DEAD KENNEDYS
"PLASTIC SURGERY DISASTERS/IN GOD WE TRUST, INC." CD

What can I say about this CD? If you're not intimately familiar with these records, than you should be. This is especially true of "Plastic Surgery Disasters" which is easily the DK's best and is also one of the best punk albums of all time. 'Nuff said. (JC) (Decay/PO Box 11399/Oakland, CA 94611)



DS-13
"KILLED BY THE KIDS" CD

This band is all the rage right now, and for damn good reason. Thrashy, trashy hardcore from Sweden, performed by guys who are old enough to remember how it should be done - loud fast rules! (BAM) (no label or address listed)



DEMONICS/TURBO A.C.'S
SPLIT 7"

Gearhead fans, this is for you. The DEMONICS, who totally rock, check in with "Mopar Or No Car", a fab song for all you motorheads. The TURBO A.C.'s chug along with their punk'n'roller "Clean". I prefer the DEMONICS, if only because they're more fun and dress up as devils. Then again, I drive a Toyota. (MC) (Radio Blast, no address)



DERIDE
S/T 7" EP

This happens to fall into the "really fast punk rock" school of hardcore, and I couldn't be happier. These guys crank out four out of control tunes that clock in at a combined time of just under 4 minutes. Everything is in Japanese, but even though I have no clue what they're saying I dig it. (MC) (Henk Kangaroo Smit/Middenweg 13/1098 AA Amsterdam/HOLLAND)



DESTRO
"THE ACCURACY OF BROKEN WHISPERS" CD

This reminded me a lot of old EARTH CRISIS, but with a lot more energy. Imagine Karl EXC singing for the early CRO-MAGS. No, don't imagine that, just buy this. They admirably straddle the divide between the old and new school. (STM) (Ides of March/5 Gerry Road/Poughkeepsie, NY 12603)

DIALTONES/ALLEY 'GATORS
SPLIT 7" EP

I hope all of you have heard the DIALTONES by now. This great fucking band appear to be the heirs to the DEVIL DOGS' crown, and the two tunes here further support that theory. The Alley 'Gators are a worthy companion, since they belt out two top-notch punk'n'roll tunes. (MC) (Desert Inn/Via Dotti 49/31100 Treviso/ITALY)



DIRT BIKE ANNIE
"NIGHT OF THE LIVING ROCK'N'ROLL CREATION" 7" EP

NYC's DIRT BIKE ANNIE release yet another single for all you Mutant Pop freaks. The hooks are there, and a pretty funny spoken word bit is included. Fans of the current state of pop punk should jump all over this. (MC) (Knock Knock/394 Hewlett Avenue/Patchogue, NY 11772)

DIRTBOMBS
"CHARIOTS OF THE GODS?" CD EP

It's no secret that I flat-out LOVE this band. They change sounds and members so frequently that it keeps things fresh and exciting. This release, like all of their others, is all-over-the-place and rockin'. There's a great version of "Mystery Train", and "They Hate Us In Scandinavia" is amazing because it's got lots of great fuzz. (MC) (Au-Go-Go/GPO Box 542d/Melbourne, Victoria 3001/AUSTRALIA)

D.M.Z.

"LIVE AT THE RAT" CD

D.M.Z. are definitely one of my all-time faves, and Bomp should be praised for unleashing this monster live disc. All the dirty Detroit-style r'n'r songs on here were recorded live at the late, great Rat in Boston; some showcase the band at their peak in 1976, whereas others were recorded at a reunion gig in 1993. A true treat for those who never experienced them live, and an even bigger treat for those dumb enough to have never heard 'em at all. (MC) (Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)



DOGS

"SLASH YOUR FACE" 7" EP

This is the finest EP by longtime "Killed By Death" faves the DOGS. Having moved

from Detroit to L.A. in the late 70s, these folks successfully managed to fuse Motor City rock'n'roll with classic L.A. punk, and it's quite a potent mix. A truly great and highly sought-after record. (MC) (Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

DOGSHIT SANDWICH

"GARY GLITTER, YOU FILTHY CUNT" 7"

This awesome 7" contains four songs of pure, no-bullshit punk rock. Most of the lyrics are about hating the sellout music industry that brainwashes young kids into believing that certain popular bands are punk. Brilliant stuff, especially in the song "Wannabe", where they making fun of ska-punk and rip on the people that play that style. "Shite Popular Music"! (CLL) (Weird/61 London Road/Balderton, Newark/Notts NG24 3AG/ENGLAND)

DOG TOFFEE

"KILLER ROCK'N'ROLL" LP

Pretty boring punk'n'roll stuff, though there's leads-aplenty and vocal snarl. The songs range from full-on rockers to heavy, bouncy mid-tempo numbers, and the band even goes for a slick,

melodic sound on a couple tunes. (MC) (Radio Blast/PO Box 160 308/ 40566 Düsseldorf/GERMANY)



THE DONALDS

"I WANNA BE IN PALO ALTO" 7" EP

This whole project is an obvious joke, but when you see the sleeve of this single you can't

help but laugh. It's a novelty record made by goofy guys playing sloppy and poppy MISFITS-inspired punk, poking fun at everything the whole way through. (MC) (Cabeza De Tornado/203 1/2 Acacia/Huntington Beach, CA 92648)

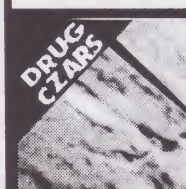


DROWNINGMAN

"STILL LOVES YOU" CD

More metalcore. More shifting from raspy screaming to off-key singing. The difference is that these guys seem

to have an honest appreciation of music rather than an honest appreciation of what has worked for other bands. A solid and psychotic album for fans of VISION OF DISORDER and POISON THE WELL. (STM) (www.equalvision.com)



DRUG CZARS

"ON VENUS" 7" EP

70's rock/punk with good, snotty vocals and lots of fuzz. There is such a mammoth amount of stuff like this

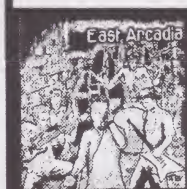
out there that you could a lot better (and also A LOT worse) than this. I dig it, but it probably won't get you overly excited. (MC) (Fruit Bat Entertainment/PO Box 772412/Coral Springs, FL 33077)

EAST ARCADIA

S/T 7" EP

I'm guessing that "the kids" still have room in their hearts for melodic hardcore. EAST ARCADIA sound a whole lot like GOOD RIDDANCE, so if you like

REVIEWS



them you'll probably like this. I've long since given up on this stuff, but if you're still down with it, go for bro! (MC)

(G.C./PO Box

3743/Laguna Hills, CA 92654)

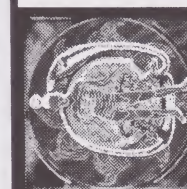
EAST BAY CHASERS

"JOYRIDE" CD

The EAST BAY CHASERS have a snarl and a bite to them. Good fast-tempo punk rock with an emphasis on the rock. Singer Reed has a laconic drawl that falls somewhere in between Stiv Bators and (dare I say it?) Perry Ferrell. Overall, a good new punk band that I recommend checking out.

(JC)

(Industrial Strength/2824 Reggatta Blvd./Richmond, CA 24804)



EMO SUMMER

"LAND OF EMOTIONAL PLASTIC FURNITURE" CD

You probably really like mustard and you probably really like ice

cream, but you would probably not like mustard ice cream. EMO SUMMER is like a gallon-sized carton of mustard ice cream: interesting artwork, nifty packaging, and way too many ideas and musical influences crammed onto one CD. Think (ATOM AND HIS PACKAGE + ARCHERS OF LOAF) x (ADJECTIVE NOUN + CAPTURED BY ROBOTS) = still not as cool as TICKLE ME EMO. Saying that it's uneven would be kind. (LG)

(Nothing

Enterprises/www.nothingenterprises.com)

EMO SUMMER

"THE RAIN IS CRYING" FLOPPY DISK, IBM FORMATTED.

Six loud seconds on one floppy disk. Black is the color: like shiny Doc Martens, like MORRISEY's hair, like patent leather belts, like Gotherella's

SHITLIST

lipstick on a rainy night, like – oh god, just shoot me now. Also included is a little xeroxed zine, how cute! (LG)
(Nothing Enterprises/www.nothingenterprises.com)



END IT
"MEET YOUR MAKER"
CD

Fucking heavy. COLD AS LIFE/ABOVE THIS WORLD immediately come to mind. It's very Philly. Or very Clevo. An awesome record, hardest of the hard. This thing is a freight train: (STM)
(www.atarmsmechanics.com)

ENGRAINED

"DEVIL'S GAME TOUR" CD

This is a terrific band from Hanover, Germany. ENGRAINED has been a band with the same members for over thirteen years, and they sound like a cross between NIBLICK HENBANE and MOTÖRHEAD. There are five songs on this CD, which are all sung in English. Excellent punk rock. (CLL)
(motorstoffs@gmx.de / www.engrained.de)



EXPLODERS
"NEW VARIATIONS"
CD

Crazy, deviant Canadians on a punk rock rampage...or something. This CD is

their best outing yet, far surpassing their already good singles. Eleven tunes, plenty of fuzz'n'screech, and a DEAD BOYS cover. I suspect that this is the ugliest band from Canada, which is saying something. (MC)
(Teenage USA/PO Box 91-689 Queen Street W./Toronto, Ontario M6J 1E6/CANADA)

FARTZ

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?" CD

Wait a second, haven't we heard this all before? An odd re-recording of classic material with Jack Endino at the controls. I guess what this shows is that the FARTZ still definitely rip. A great record, whatever the reason. (JC)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

FATAL FLYING GUILLOTEENS

"THE NOW HUSTLE FOR NEW DIABOLIKS" CD

The FATAL FLYING GUILLOTEENS are fucking fabulous, far out, and freaky. This release is fantastic fruit for fans of Estrus Records. One of the best Texas bands going, who I hear caused a near riot at an Austin show recently. Definitely worth checking out. (JC)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)



FEDERATION X
"AMERICAN FOLK HORROR" CD

Noisy, messy and raw rock'n'roll. There's a definite blues and country influence mixed

in with punk bashing, which hits the spot. I read that they have toured exclusively in an Impala, which I think is great. (MC)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

FELCHERS

S/T CD EP (CD-R)

I hope they scanned the cover of this CD so that all of you can see how disgusting the band's logo is. That is the only thing about this release that stands out, and even that's not all that cool. The FELCHERS play tough guy punk'n'roll with gruff vocals. (MC)
(Felchers c/o Adam/3-1895 Commercial Drive/Vancouver, BC V5N 4A6/CANADA)

FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM

"WELCOME TO THE OCTAGON" CD

Another heaping helping of loud, jammy rock from these noisemakers. Their



earlier recordings reminded me a lot of MC5, but they seem to be branching out more now. This Tim Kerr recording really pushes them out there, making

them sound more "in your face". A damn fine live band, too. (MC)
(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

FIRE IN THE STATE

"A TITLE NEVER FITS" CD

Mid-to-fast tempo punk that reminded me of the whole "vet's hall local band opener" sound. Does that make sense? Pretty catchy without losing its rawness. (STM)
(Nextstop/PO Box 711/Medina, NY 14103)

FIRST STEP

"DEMO 2001" CD

FIRST STEP remind me of REDEMPTION 87 meets early DAG NASTY, and there certainly isn't anything wrong with that! Straightedge HC out of North Carolina (which is just above South Carolina), and the vocals are a lot like Shawn Brown's from SWIZ/DAG NASTY). I look forward to hearing a lot more from this band. (BAM)
(Live Wire, no address listed)



FLESHIES

"KILL THE DREAMER'S DREAM" CD

These folks are one of the few great local bands right now. I thought all their other

releases were really good, but this one takes the cake. FLESHIES (no "the") sound like a perfect mixture of "Ass Cobra"-era TURBONEGRO and drunken East Bay punk like BLATZ. Needless to say, it's one of the best this year. (MC)
(Alternative Tentacles/PO Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

F? MINUS

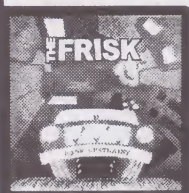
"SUBURBAN BLIGHT" CD

This is a good, fast, angry-sounding hardcore band from L.A. They wisely mix it up with male and female vocals to obtain more variety. This CD has twenty songs in all, and it almost reminds of some old Oakland bands like ECONOCHRIST. (CLL)
(Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd./Los Angeles, CA 90026)

THE FORGOTTEN

"THE SINGLES COLLECTION" CD

Could these guys get any catchier? Damn near every song is a singalong anthem à la RANCID meets STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, and this CD is a collection of all their assorted 7" and comp tracks from various labels. I wouldn't be surprised if these guys get huge soon. (JC)
(Bad Dog/PO Box 610641/10937 Berlin/GERMANY)



FRISK

"RANK RESTRAINT" CD EP

This rules. East Bay fuckin' punk rock from members of A.F.I., NERVE AGENTS, and

the now defunct CRIMINALS. It also features a CLASH cover and Jesse Michaels on guest vox to boot! First go buy this, and then go lay in the gutter and listen to it. (BAM)
(Adeline/5337 College Avenue #318/Oakland, CA 94618)

FULLBLOWN

"AGENTS OF ENTROPY" CD

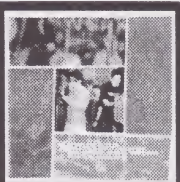
This band is at its best when they stick to instrumental songs. For some reason, they lose it for me when they sing (which thankfully isn't very often). Music-wise, they are deft musicians who play a cool blend of surfy, twangy, organ-driven rock and roll, and the get bonus points for great song titles like "Death By Sodomy", Hail Damage", and "Nubian Lust". (JC)
(Speed Nebraska/PO Box 3103/Omaha, NE 68103)



FURY 66

"RED GIANT EVOLUTION" CD

Unfortunately, I think most of the boys from FURY are getting their spotlight time now in their current bands – GOOD RIDDANCE, ONE TIME ANGELS, NERVE AGENTS, and AUDIOCRUSH. That's too bad, cuz in their prime FURY were as good as any of these. Fast hardcore punk rock like that of their classmates A.F.I. and SCREW 32. There are ten tracks here, mainly taken from out of print records and compilations. (BAM)
(Sessions/15 Janice Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)



GAMEFACE

"FEELS ALOT BETTER" CD EP

"An Unpunk Endeavor," the CD proudly (?) proclaims on the back. They got that much

right. ELVIS COSTELLO and MORRISSEY covers, plus three suitably low key, lacklustre originals, make this a bit of a disappointment. It's not awful, but it is a pale shadow of their earlier melodic glory. (RK)
(Firefly/www.fireflyrecordings.com)



GARGAMELS

"STAR IN... BETTY FAT AND THE FATAL FLYING DONUTS" CD EP (CD-R)

Young guys doing the standard pop-punk thing. Is it pop-punk? I

think it's pop-punk. It sure sounds pop-punk. Hold on, let me check again really quick. Yup, pop-punk. (MC)
(Brucemonkey/PO Box 2743/Salem, OR 97308)

GASOLINE

"FAKE TO FAME" CD

A great punk/jazz/blues band from Japan, and a perfect release for Estrus fans. This is a solid record from start to

REVIEWS

finish, and GASOLINE kind of remind me of a Japanese version of the LORD HIGH FIXERS. (JC)

(Estrus/PO Box 2125/Bellingham, WA 98227)

G.F.N.R. vs. INEBRIATION

"CELEBRITY DEATH DISC #1" CD

G.F.N.R. is along the same lines of GG ALLIN – scum fuck punk – and have song titles like "She Swallows Cum" and "Anal Slut Vampire Bitch". These and other songs will surely piss off all the uptight punks who are around these days, but I think I can actually hear a "bitch" screaming in the background on this record. INEBRIATION has more of a Confederacy of Scum rock and roll sound, and are pretty tight (CLL)
(www.toxictoons.com)



GLASSEATER

"7 YEARS BAD LUCK" CD

This is a mighty CD in every way. A towering production lays the foundation for a truly rocking record. Mix up

the best of HOT WATER MUSIC with the finest that the melodic SoCal sound, and think of a chugga chugga NO USE FOR A NAME or FACE TO FACE with huge melodies and even bigger balls positively reeking of emo. Then you'll be ready to get down with these dudes. (RK)
(Fearless/www.fearlessrecords.com)

GOVERNMENT SATIRE/DEFIANT TRESPASS

"JUST AS GOOD" CD

Two bands, each providing ten tracks or so of spiky, political, raging hardcore...proving that that spirit of CRASS, CONFLICT, and ANTISECT is indeed alive and well. GOVERNMENT SATIRE even had – they've since broken up – the male/female vocal thing down, which was very hip back in the day (i.e., Britain in the early 80s). (RK)
(Square Of Opposition/2935 Fairview Street/Bethlehem, PA 18020)

SHITLIST

GRABBIES/WALLY GATORS

SPLIT 7" EP

The GRABBIES just plain suck: they play obnoxious, over the top, screamy hardcore thrash. Alas, the WALLY GATORS aren't much better, but at least they're less obnoxiously bad. (JC)
(Scarey/Via Galliera 32/1/10025 Pino T.se (TO)/ITALY)

GROOVIE GHOULIES

"SUMMER FUN" CD EP

+ ZINE

An awesome 5-song CD and band zine. The GHOULIES have always been a blast, and this is certainly no exception. The five tracks on the CD are alternate and live takes of familiar tunes. My favorite parts are the "Graveyard Girlfriend" track and the live crowd interaction, and the zine is more fun than a barrel of monkeys because of its games, band info, and Chupacabra stories. D.I. fuckin' Y. (JC) (Green Door-Kepi's label/no address listed)

THE GUESS WHO

"SHAKIN' ALL OVER" CD

A collection of early (i.e., mid-60's) GUESS WHO songs, including their well-known version of JOHNNY KIDD & THE PIRATES' classic, "Shakin' All Over". The rest of the LP is a mixed bag of other fine rock'n'roll songs (like "Tuff E Nuff" and "Baby Feelin'"), Merseybeat numbers (like "I'd Rather Be Alone"), surf-style instrumentals (like "Made In England"), and tougher semi-punk cuts (like "Believe Me", "Clock on the Wall", "If You Don't Want Me", and especially "It's My Pride"), many of which feature a tasty guitar twang and strong vocals. Not all 24 songs are equally top-notch, but as usual Sundazed has extracted a great sound from the original master tapes. (JB)
(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

GUTTERPUNX

"ANOTHER YEAR WASTED" CD

The GUTTERPUNX are a melodic streetpunk group. Given their name I was expecting more of a sloppy, chaotic style, but they're pretty clean-sounding and not bad at all. (CLL)
(Transparent/6759 Transparent Drive/Clarkston, MI 48346)



HACKSAW/MERCURY

THE WINGED

MESSENGER

SPLIT 7" EP

HACKSAW play uptempo crunchy rock'n'roll. MERCURY

THE WINGED MESSENGER are all over the place, and cop all sorts of cliched heavy metal stylings. They're interesting mostly because their side is instrumental and they throw so much at you that some of it works. Both bands have potential. (JC)
(Global Symphonic/
www.Globalsymphonic.com)

HATE FUCK TRIO

"GOOD SONGS TO FUCK TO" CD

I love that HATE FUCK TRIO thank their moms and dads before anybody else. This is surprisingly melodic and mostly straightforward, more so than their name and artwork would imply. More often than not this sounds like SoCal punk that's heavily jokey but listenable. It also features guest luminaries like Karl Alvarez from ALL/DESCENDENTS and a couple of guys from FISHBONE. (JC)
(Hairball 8/ 9528 Miramar Road #111/ San Diego, CA 92126)

HELLBENDERS/SAFETY PINS

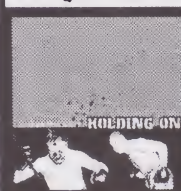
SPLIT CD

Both bands play a brand of tight, uptempo punk rock that makes you want to get up and dance. The SAFETY PINS come off a bit more trashy and cool, and therefore win the competition on this CD. (JC)
(Deadbeat/PO Box 283/Los Angeles, CA 90078)

HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

"ROCK'N'ROLL FINAL EXAM" 7" EP

Listening to this makes me miss the RAMONES more than ever. This is another RAMONESey band, and they do a decent job. But they dip a little too heavily into the 90's pop punk sound for my tastes, though their hearts are in the right place. (MC)
(Daytime Dilemma/Via Barontoli 327a/53010 S.Rocco a P. (SI)/ITALY)



HOLDING ON

"JUST ANOTHER DAY" CD

It's like youth crew kids playing metal, but I'll be damned if it isn't intriguing. It's got the

whole Midwest (or is it Northeast?) thing going on, as in MARTYR, BROTHER'S KEEPER, UNEARTH, etc. Good stuff. (STM)
(Havoc/www.havocrex.com)

HAMMERLOCK

"BAREFOOT AND PREGNANT" CD

If you've ever wondered what MOLLY HATCHET would have sounded like if they'd been a punk band, here you have it. HAMMERLOCK play a dirty, downright dastardly brand of redneck rock'n'roll with more cowbell hits per minute than any other band alive. (JC)
(Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)

HOPE CONSPIRACY

"FILE 03" CD EP

This EP is made up of their new Bridge 9 7" (which contains the best song they've ever done, "No Love Goes Unpunished", and a cover of NAKED RAYGUN's "Treason"), as well as their out of print CD EP on Life Records. If I could only pick one word to describe their brand of HC, it would have to be heavy. (BAM)
(Bridge 9/PO Box 990052/Boston, MA 02199)

HOT POCKETS

"MESS OF FIRE" CD

Decent punk/garage from Holland.

Since all the members are from various places and other bands, I guess the HOT POCKETS were a side-project band which just did a bunch of recording and some select shows. A few of their tunes remind me of the DEVIL DOGS, which is good. (MC)
(International
Trash/www.internationaltrash.com)

HOT ROD HONEYS

"Kill Me Now!" LP

Killer punk rock'n'roll from Belgium. For those who haven't heard 'em, They do the rude 'tude crunchy punk thang and then add a little RAMONES to the mix. This is the HONEYS' third LP and they show no signs of toning it down. My favorite song title is "Cute Puke", which, coincidentally, is Brett Matthews' nickname! What are the odds of that? (MC)
(Demolition Derby/PB 4005/2800
Mechelen 4/BELGIUM)

HUDSON FALCONS

"FOR THOSE WHOSE HEARTS AND SOULS ARE TRUE" CD

This is really good punk rock with a Southern rock tinge to it, but it's still very aggressive and tough-sounding. As before, the FALCONS play straight-up rocking tunes throughout their new CD. Pick it up. (CLL)
(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA
30333)

HYBRIDS

"7 HITS FROM SPACE" CD EP

These guys must have been abducted by aliens, since all their songs are about that topic. And that's fine with me: I still think aliens are cool, although most would consider them a little late 90s. The music is mid-tempo garage pop with slurred vocals and a hint of ROY ORBISON. (LD)
(Hybrid/127 W. Fairbanks Avenue
#420/Winter Park, FL 32787)

ICKY & THE YUKS

"EUREKA PIGNESS" CD

An "old school" band whose only



ambition is to get drunk and offend everyone. I think that they might have some success in achieving those goals. This is a live recording of an obviously drunken set that's filled with simple, speedy punk rock. (MC)
(ickyandtheyucks@hotmail.com)

I LOVE RICH

"THE GREATEST ROCK'N'ROLL RECORD OF ALL TIME!!" CD

Coming soon to a sports bar near you are I LOVE RICH! Try to control yourselves. Seriously, novelty bar-rock bands seem to be the wave of the future. Ugly men with mullets doing their best MOTLEY CRÜE impersonations are geniuses. Don't you agree? (MC)
(www.iloverich.net)

IMPOSSIBLE ONES

"TAKE WHAT WE WANT B/W So Long" 7"

Impossibly snotty singalong punk. The IMPOSSIBLE ONES have a lot of scrappy energy, so don't be turned off by the goofy cover. Good luck finding a copy, though. (JC)
(Cleanroom/mikeverbos@yahoo.com)



INSANIACS

"s/r" CD

This band has an early 80's BLACK FLAG feel to it. They play really good punk rock with lots of riffs and a fine vocal presentation, and have a pretty funny sense of humor as well. The music makes me feel like going out and "fucking shit up, man." (CLL)
(Insaniacs/1025 Grant Avenue, Suite
503/Winnipeg, Manitoba R3M
2A2/CANADA)

INQUISITION

"REVOLUTION, I THINK IT'S CALLED INSPIRATION" LP

One of the finest full-lengths to ever

REVIEWS

come out of Richmond, VA, which is saying a lot, has finally appeared on vinyl. Major kudos are owed to Seven Lucky Records for getting this together. INQUISITION is finished, but its members carried on in bands like ANN BERETTA, RIVER CITY HIGH, and STRIKE ANYWHERE. With the exception of the latter, I would say that this easily blows all of those other bands away. (BAM)
(Seven Lucky/PO Box 9546/Denver, CO
80209)

IRON CROSS

"LIVE FOR NOW" CD

This contains some classic old stuff that's already been re-released as well as some older unreleased material. They had their share of controversy in the early days, but all is explained in the booklet insert. I always thought that this band sounded like a 45 record played at 33 speed in some of their songs, but here they play a mix of slower and fast tracks. A great CD to have, given all the rare, hard-to-find stuff from 1981-83 on it. (CLL)
(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA
30333)

JANITOR

"THERE ARE NO MORE AMERICAN HEROES" CD

This short, ass-kicking CD is filled with disillusionment, anger, desperation, and political lyrics. Musically, JANITOR are really fast and downright belligerent, sort of like the PIST. Just try and keep up. (LD)
(Plethorazine, no address listed)

JEFF DAHL

"PANCAKE 31" CD

The master is back. All these fools posing down like they know how to rock have to sit the fuck down when this cat walks into the room. Ten tracks of pure rock'n'roll naughtiness. If you don't know about Mr. DAHL, you should definately check him out. I think the track "Last Of The Red Hot Cocksuckers" explains it all. (JC)

SHITLIST

(Triple X/PO Box 862529/Los Angeles, CA 90086)



JERKS

"We Hate You" CD

Most famous for "Get Your Woofing Dog Off Me", the JERKS were a UK band that played around when punk was

sweeping the nation in 1977. This is a live CD, but surprisingly it turned out to be pretty limp. It's culled from three shows, two from the 1970s and one from 1997, which was a pretty uninspired reunion gig. Stick to the band's studio release on Overground. (MC)

(Overground/PO Box 1NW/Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW/ENGLAND)

JIM JACOBI

"CRAP CIRCLES, THE JIM JACOBI CHRONICLES: CRAP DETECTORS AND BEYOND, 1978-2001" CD

The CRAP DETECTORS were/are a seminal and influential garage punk band that never really made it out of a small cult status. This CD chronicles their whole career with different line-ups as well as assorted side projects of Jim Jacobi. Perhaps the best way to describe them is as a mixture of DEAD MOON, the DICKS, and Frank Zappa. A lot of the music on this is great, but the layout and (lack of) info sucks. (JC) (no label or address listed)

JJ NOBODY & THE REGULARS

"Rock And Roll Doesn't End At 2:00" CD

You might be a redneck if you and your punk bandmates all put on cowboy hats and start posturing like hillbillies. You might be a redneck when you start playing psuedo-country songs about bars, drinking, and being a "Son Of A Bitch". More than likely, though, you're just having a little fun with a popular fad that was totally played out by the

SUPERSUCKERS about four years ago. Some of the songs on this are OK, but I can't really recommend it even though I like the NOBODYS. (JC) (Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)



JOHN HENRY HOLIDAY

"Know The Ropes" CD EP

As the promo sticker says, it's "3-chord Orange County hardcore, built to knock you out cold...Dan O. Mahoney from NO FOR AN ANSWER and CARRY NATION on vocals". I couldn't have said it better myself. A great in-your-face CD filled with social commentary and angst that's reminiscent of Mahoney's band 411. My one gripe is that it's only 6 songs. (BAM) (Live Wire/PO Box 239/Seal Beach, CA 90740)



JOHNNY THUNDERS & THE HEARTBREAKERS

"Dead or Alive" DVD

This is a HEARTBREAKERS concert interspersed with clips from their 1976 UK "Anarchy" tour, so it's a must for all fans. 16 tracks and post-gig scenes provide some insight, or maybe absolutely no insight, into what made THUNDERS such a prime influence to us all, if you know what I mean. If not, then you really need to buy this and figure it out for yourself. (X) (Cherry Red/Unit 17, 1st floor/ElysiumGate West/126-128 New King's Road/London SW6 4LZ/ENGLAND)



KILL-A-WATTS

"Dig These Kids/Snotty Bastard" 7"

The KILL-A-WATTS, who released a record a while back on Rip Off, continue on with two incredibly short and great songs. Young, loud, snotty, fuck, suck, etc. I keep playing this over

and over again. You will too, and they've got an album coming soon. (MC) (Yakisakana/51 Rue Pierre Renaudel/76 100 Rouen/FRANCE)



THE KILLING FLAME

"The Dream Dies" CD

Yet another "ex-members of..." band. This one has members of IGNITE, NO FOR AN ANSWER, UNITY, SPEAK 714, and HANDS TIED. And it sounds like a morphing of all those bands, only more grown up – it's got the same energy, but everything seems so much more earnest. This sounds like everything REV put out after their early hardcore years. (STM) (Livewire/www.livewire-records.com)

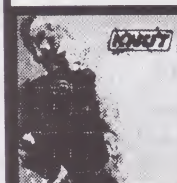


KILL YOUR IDOLS

"Funeral For A Feeling" CD

More moshy hardcore with integrity in spades and no metal whatsoever. Fast and

pissed, baby. K.Y.I. brings to mind KILLING TIME and other blazing bands of that era. And NEGATIVE APPROACH (sorry, guys). (STM) (Side One Dummy/www.sideonedummy.com)



KNUT

"Bastardiser" CD

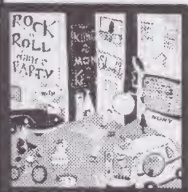
If HELMET jammed with BOTCH at a metal festival, you'd end up with this record. Intense and

frightening, with a groove running through the brutality. If heaviness is your game, KNUT should be your team. (STM) (Hydrahead/PO Box 990248/Boston, MA 02199)

KUNG FU MONKEYS

"Rock And Roll Dance Party" 7" EP

This record and band are as much fun as a barrel full of monkeys, since they're drenched in 60's bubblegum and girl



group sounds. Side A is an homage to HERMAN'S HERMITS, so that should give you a clue as to what they're all about. I give this band a lot of credit for

doing something that's completely different from everything else that's going on around them. For fans of pure pop. (JC) (Knock Knock/ www.knockknockrecords.com)



LACK OF INTEGRITY / SCURVY BASTARDS SPLIT CD

L.O.I play some sloppy mediocre punk with a weird hardcore vocal sound. The SCURVY

BASTARDS sound like the POGUES on a pirate ship, which was a bit of a surprise. Arrgghh, matey!! (CLL) (1280 Gentry Way #44/Reno, NV 89502)

LAZY AMERICAN WORKERS

"ANOTHER HALF-ASSED JOB WELL DONE" CD

There's not much info here, maybe because the CD was done in a half-assed way, but the music still rocks. The WORKERS play an upbeat rocking punk style with a bit of melody on the vocals, but they tend to keep a fast pace going. All in all they sound sorta like SUBINCISION in their early days. (CLL) (Biscuit Scrubbers L.A.W./PO Box 6487/Toledo, OH 43612)



LEATHERFACE "DISCOGRAPHY, PART 2" CD

Having read this far, you should already have all the information you need

to be on your way to the record store. Pure punk rock that splits the pins between JAWBREAKER and fellow Euros SNUFF. Twelve amazing hook-filled studio tracks drawn from out-of-print releases. I could take or leave the eight live tracks, but the other material is essential. (BAM) (Rejected/rejected@thumped.com)



LEFTÖVER CRACK "MEDIocre GENERICA" CD

A new(?) squat rock supergroup. From the ashes of CHOKING VICTIM and NO

COMMERCIAL VICTIM, L.O.C. spring forth with thirteen tracks of blazing thrash, ska, rock, and punk. An eclectic and surprisingly coherent collection from the crusty stars. (RK) (Hellcat/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)



THE LEWD "ROUGHHOUSE" 7" EP

The LEWD are back and they're still pretty nasty. I've heard a lot of good things about the shows they've been playing

lately, and this 7" confirms the rumors. I think the band only has about three original members now, but they still manage to retain their classic punked-out sound. (JC)

(702/PO Box 204/Reno, NV 89504)

LIMECELL

"If We Can't Rock, It's War" CD

Yet another pummelling release from LIMECELL. They still have that adrenalized MOTÖRHEAD scum rock feel to their music, but their vocals stray a bit more into WRETCHED ONES territory on this record. LIMECELL are not for the whiney P.C. complainers in the scene, and are endorsed by the Confederacy of Scum. (CLL) (Steel Cage/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)

LO-LITE

"COMICS" LP

A crazy two-man blues-punk from Holland with lots of slide guitar, fuzz, and general musical bashing. It's a very weird mix, but an effective one. Fans of BOB LOG III should seek this out. (MC) (702/PO Box 204/Reno, NV 89504)

REVIEWS

LOST SOUNDS

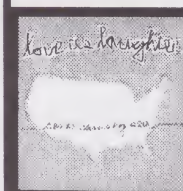
"MEMPHIS IS DEAD" CD

One of my favorites of the issue. LOST SOUNDS play a nice creepy, organ-based New Wave punk. Everything that I have heard from them has been good, and I think that if they get some more exposure people will really dig them. Music with a lot of moods to it. (JC) (Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)

LOUTS

"THE PISSED AND LOUD EP" CD

Basic mid-tempo Oi music from the LOUTS, who have a lot of really good hooks in their songs. The lyrics are about drinking, working, and smashing things up! This is an ideal release for all you "Thugs, Mugs, & Hooligans". (CLL) (Murder & Mayhem/1500 Miriam Street/Garner, NC 27529)



LOVE AS LAUGHTER "SEA TO SHINING SEA" CD

This is indie-rock, or so I hear. That said, there are some great rockers on this record.

It's cool to hear a band like this that actually cares about rock'n'roll. Totally great guitar work, even though they get swirly and slow at times. (MC)

(Sub Pop/PO Box 20645/Seattle, WA 98102)

MAD DADDYS

"THE AGE OF ASPARAGUS" CD

First off, I love the title and cover, which are excellent. This is a pretty rockin' CD overall, although I don't think it's the best thing I've ever heard from this band. My favorite tracks are the cool, spacy instrumental, "Cochring 3:16" and the CRAMPS-y "King Of The Wild Frontier". (JC)

(R.A.F.R./11054 Ventura Blvd. #205/Studio City, CA 91604)

SHITLIST



**MAD FOR THE
RACKET**
"THE RACKETEERS"
CD

I'm definitely a Brian James fan, so much so that I rode for seven hours last Spring to catch the ex-DAMNED/LORDS OF THE NEW CHURCH guitarist for an unannounced gig with his new Wayne Kramer project. This CD features Stewart Copeland from the POLICE), Clem Burke from BLONDIE, and Duff McKagen from GUNS N'ROSES. The disc is loud and raucous and Brian's Keef Richards-style vocals are lazy and surp. If you want another comparison, the disc is painful like NEIL YOUNG's honesty and filthy like THEE HEADCOATS' fury. (X) (Muscle Tone/8949 Sunset Blvd., Suite #203/West Hollywood, CA 90069)



MAN OR ASTROMAN
**"BEYOND THE BLACK
HOLE" CD**

The VENTURES put out approximately 30 albums in the 1960s. As far as I'm

concerned, most all of them were 1) pretty cool, original, and fun, and 2) barely distinguishable from each other unless they were thematic albums. I like the VENTURES and I like MAN OR ASTROMAN, but I could swear that I've already reviewed this record. It's good, but if you've already checked them out you know what to expect. (JC) (Estrus/ P.O. Box 2125/ Bellingham, WA 98227)



MATICS
"IGNITION" CD

Don't be fooled (I was, not to say a little disconcerted!) by the Mod symbol on the back! These fresh

young fellows are doing their best to keep that old classic 80's punk 'Chicago sound' alive – think the EFFIGIES or

mid-period NAKED RAYGUN with a dash of PEGBOY. They're not that good, but they're not bad either. (RK) (Jettison Music/www.jettisonmusic.com)

MEDIA BLITZ
"DADDY'S LITTLE GIRL" CD

MEDIA BLITZ have been around for about ten years now and have had a few different vocalists in the past, but this is the best they've ever sounded. Strong female vocalist Beast can really belt stuff out of her trap, and guitarist Tony Fingers is just amazing; a couple of the songs here are from his past bands (like "Kill The Cockroach" which is a classic). Quintessential East Los Angeles punk. (CLL) (AGRSV/PO Box 911562/Los Angeles, CA 90091)

MEDIA WHORES
"FEEL IT" 7" EP

Side A is the best MEDIA WHORES song that I have heard so far, but the B-side continues their policy of putting softer acoustic tracks on the flip sides of their 7"ers. Unfortunately, their acoustic songs suck – they're way too polished and "MTV Unplugged"-sounding to work. If all I'd heard from this band were songs like the A side, I would think that they were an amazing, balls-out rock'n'roll band. (JC) (Break Up/PO Box 15372/Columbus, OH 43215)

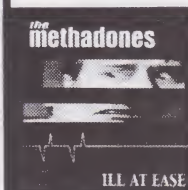
MEMBRANES
"KISS ASS, GODHEAD" CD

I have to admit that I'd never heard of the MEMBRANES before and didn't have high hopes for them after looking at the cover. Thankfully, I was pleasantly surprised, since the MEMBRANES are actually a very interesting English band that has been around since the late 70s. They play punk rock on the dark and noisy – dare I say experimental? – side. (JC) (Overground/PO Box 1NW/Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE99 1NW/ENGLAND)



MENACE
"CRISIS" CD

Their first new record in 23 years. And the old geezers still manage to sound fresh, vital, and downright rocking, as well as blow the shit out of 95% of so called streetpunk around these days. If only the BUSINESS were half this good, their reputation might be merited. Excellent production showcases twelve new originals, and a cracking cover of A.T.V.'s "Action, Time & Vision". (RK) (Captain Oi!/www.captainoi.com)



METHADONES
"ILL AT EASE" CD

The two Dan's - Shaefer and Lumley - late of SCREECHING WEASEL, the QUEERS et al, are back. While it

doesn't quite scale the heights of Shaefer's mighty SLUDGEWORTH, this is an excellent collection of guitar heavy, hook-laden, driving pop punk which should make Ben Weasel, not to mention the late Joey Ramone, suitably happy. A fine offering. (RK) (A-F/www.anti-flag.com)

MIGHTY GORDINIS
"KISS MY WHEELS" LP

The MIGHTY GORDINIS, from Belgium, cover a wide range of genres here. They do the standard punk thing, but this album is mostly focused on surf and 50's/60's greaser rock. The album is also half instrumental, which works well. A solid debut. (MC) (Demolition Derby/PB 4005/2800 Mechelen 4/BELGIUM)

THE MIGHTY HANNIBAL
"HANNIBALISM!" CD

Continuing down the same road as they did with ANDRE WILLIAMS, RUDY RAY MOORE, and GINO WASHINGTON, Norton Records has unearthed another maniac soul genius, The MIGHTY HANNIBAL. I believe he is best known for the big 1963 seller, "Baby Please Change Your Mind", although the

recordings on this CD date from 1958 to 1973. Fantastic voice, bad attitude, dirty life, 28 tracks in all. Perfect. (MC) (Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10276)



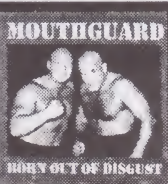
MOBY GRAPE
S/T CD

One of the finest albums to come out of the San Francisco hippie movement, and arguably one of the Top

25 rock'n'roll LPs of all time. MOBY GRAPE were an immensely talented group of drug-addled weirdos, including ex-JEFFERSON AIRPLANE member Skip Spence and Loretta Young's son Peter Lewis, who were capable of churning out killer uptempo rockers (like the classic "Omaha" and "Fall On You"), beautiful moody ballads (like the ethereal "Sitting By the Window" and "Someday"), catchy countrified rockers (like "Lazy Me"), and guitar-heavy bluesy numbers (like "Hey Grandma") with equal facility. Sometimes Bob Mosely's bluesy vocals annoy me, but they're usually drowned out by a blasting triple guitar attack and evocative three-part harmonies. (JB) (San Francisco Sound/PO Box 4011/Malibu, CA 90265)

MONSIEUR JEFFREY EVANS/DON HOWLAND
SPLIT 7"

Two GIBSON BROS. on the same record again. Jeff Evan's deeply ingrained love of blues and rock'n'roll is present in his cover of "Sweatshop Blues", whereas Howland's take on JESSIE MAY HEMPHILL's "Cowgirl Blues" is also great. This was made for the BASSHOLES/EVANS European tour. (MC) (dB's/PO Box 2550/3500 GN Utrecht/HOLLAND)



MOUTHGUARD
"BORN OUT OF DISGUST" CD

This is in-your-face hardcore with rough and tough vocals that

are mean as hell and lyrics that don't compromise. MOUTHGUARD do bust into some ska in "Fat Skinhead's Lament" and "Don't Waste My Time", but for the most part they don't deviate from the formula. They showcase a few guest singers here, which gives the listener a bit of variety and a really good dose of Australian thrash. (CLL) (Stout/PO Box 8232/Woolloongabba, Queensland 4102/AUSTRALIA)



MUD CITY MANGLERS
"TIRED OF LOSING" 7"
EP

Another killer release from this drunken combo. Great, aggressive punk rock.

"Tired Of Losing" sounds like the NEW BOMB TURKS at their most pissed off. No throwaway tunes. (MC) (007/534 East 14th Street #15/ New York, NY 10009)



MURDER CITY DEVILS
"THELMA" CD EP

Unlike many people, I've never been very excited about this band. But I was very pleasantly surprised by

this CD, which has great tunes and is dark and rockin' like all their other releases. It looks like this will be their final release, and it's good to go out with a bang. (MC) (Sub Pop/ www.subpop.com)



MUSTANG
"FULL MOON CRAZY" 7"
EP

"Full Moon Crazy" is what the BACKYARD BABIES would sound like if they toughened

up and cut the bullshit. As good as that song is, the true gems here are the two tunes on the flip, which sound like they could be TURBONEGRO "Apocalypse Dudes" outtakes. Get this. (MC) (007/534 E. 14th Street #15/ New York, NY 10009)

REVIEWS

MUTINY

MUTINY
"LUCIFER'S MOB" 7"

I foresee that this will be a much sought after 7" in the not too distant Future, since the band clearly has

what it takes to become one of the premier acts in the fast, straightforward hardcore sweepstakes. I can't wait to hear more. (BAM) (Seven Lucky/PO Box 9546/Denver, CO 80209)



MY NAME IS SATAN
"REFUSE TO KNEEL" CD

I thought I wouldn't like this because of its melodramatic, more-evil-than-thou

essence, but if truth be told it's an amazing record. Imagine DISEMBODIED and BURIED ALIVE with a heap of art school pretentiousness. (STM) (Control/PO Box 6591/Dun Laoghaire/Dublin/IRELAND)



NAKED VIOLENCE
"13 WAYS" CD

I'm gonna fill you in on all you need to know about this one. The cover art features a topless woman

covered in blood, and some sample song titles are "SleepBanditMan", "She Loves It", "Teenage Cream", and "Cheerbleeder". Maybe all this sounds good to you, but I wasn't wild about it. (MC) (www.nakedviolence.com)

NIHILISTICS
"VAGINOSIS" CD

This CD contains a live 1984 show at CBGB's in 1984 and a WNYU radio interview (which is brilliant) and live show. There's no other info besides the song titles and funny punk rock, and the rest of the CD layout features five different shots of someone's nasty

SHITLIST

rotten vagina, which is maybe why it's called "Vaginitis", but unfortunately the scratch and sniff didn't work. (CLL) (Yeah, Mate!/PO Box 1744/Collingwood, Victoria 3066/AUSTRALIA)



NO WARNING

s/t CD

Old-school NY-style hardcore from – where else? – Canada! In your face mid-80's stuff that's

reminiscent of JUDGE, the CRO-MAGS, BREAKDOWN, etc. There are six new studio tracks, and three from the original demo sessions, all really well-done. If you're looking for "Age Of Quarrel", part 2, look no further. (BAM) (Bridge 9/PO Box 990052/Boston, MA 02199)

NO TIME LEFT

"ZERO EFFORT SOLUTION" 7"

Good East Coast sXe hawdcore. NO TIME LEFT are really fast, so I'd compare them to WARZONE and NEGATIVE APPROACH. This is a good dose of 1987-style positive hardcore. (CLL) (Third Party/21 Nancy Lane/Amherst, NY 14228)



NO USE FOR A NAME

"LIVE IN A DIVE" CD

The twenty songs showcased here were hardly recorded in dives, and despite their now typical

apologies for out of tune, out of time playing, etc., this is a flawlessly played (and, more importantly these days - produced in the studio later) live recording. All the hits are here, and the crowd noise is turned up. If you've never heard them, start with "Leche Con Carne" to discover why they head the SoCal-style melodic HC pack. (RK) (Fat/www.fatwreck.com)



NORA

"LOSER'S INTUITION" CD

A metalcore band that stands out on talent alone. This album is magnificent. The singer

has one of the greatest, grimmest voice around, and the best part is that there aren't any of those "singing parts" so common in this genre. This is pure rage with no sugar in the coffee. Fans of TORN APART and EIGHTEEN VISIONS should relish this. (STM) (Trustkill/www.trustkill.com)

THE OFFS

"LIVE AT THE MABUHAY GARDENS, NOV. 7 1980" CD

One of three great releases that I got for review this issue that have live recordings from the Mab in 1980. This is another highly recommendable document of a cool and largely forgotten band. The OFFS were one of the last American bands with a heavy ska influence that didn't suck, and this CD features a high-energy live show that features all of their hits, including their classic rendition of the SLICKERS' "Johnny Too Bad". It also has Dirk Dirksen talking some hilarious shit before and after the bands. (JC) (Vampir/PO Box 1098/Mansfield, OH 44901)

ORGANIC

"FLAG" 7"

This is great. Dirty-sounding East Bay punk that you can only get from Berkeley...or, in this case, Ohio. Fans of CRIMPSHRINE or KRUPPED PEASANT FARMERZ will be more than happy if they mail-order this. (BAM) (Microcosm/7741 Ohio Street/Mentor, OH 44060)

OUT COLD

"TWO BROKEN HEARTS ARE BETTER THAN ONE" CD

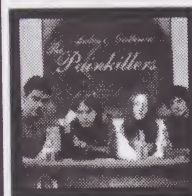
Hello death punks! All songs herein are about madness and murder. Although I caught them lifting a lyric from METALLICA (oops!), this is otherwise damn good. The lyrics are hurled out,

and the music beats you to a pulp until you're laying around in a stupor. Bonus points for the gruesome artwork. (LD) (Acme/PO Box 441/Dracut, MA 01826)

OUTPATIENTS vs. DASTUPIDS

"AMERICAN HARDCORE CLASSICS #2" LP

The OUTPATIENTS were an early spastic hardcore band from the Western Massachusetts area, and this is a recording from 1983-84. It has a good sound to it, and consists of total hyper-speed mayhem. DASTUPIDS are also crazy fast, but a bit more understandable. They sound like a hyperactive PLASMATICS. Some crazy old stuff from the early 1980s. (CLL) (Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)



PAINKILLERS

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...THE PAINKILLERS" CD

Good punk rock'n'roll from Spain. They're going for a

HEARTBREAKERS sound, so there are lots of cool THUNDERS-type riffs and leads to be found. But the PAINKILLERS keep things interesting by adding a little pop into the mix. (MC) (No Tomorrow/PO Box 1134/12080 Castellon/SPAIN)

PAJAMA SLAVE DANCERS

"SURFIN' SEX MACHINE" LP

Still more wild and crazy punk from 1983. The P.S.D. have a uniquely weird style of punk that's pretty damn bizarre. Some of it sounds like the DICKIES mixed together with fast surf punk, a warped sound, and a huge party atmosphere. This band must have been a sight to see. (CLL) (Rave Up/Via Montecuccoli 13/00176 Roma/ITALY)

PAUL E. ESTER & THE CRUEL SHOES

"EYELINER" 7" EP

The three songs here combine the melody of the METROS with the manic sound of the PIRANHAS. This isn't surprising, since the CRUEL SHOES are made up of members of both bands.

"All Your Friends Hate You Now" is definitely one of the best tunes of the year. (MC)
(Rapid Pulse/PO Box 5075/Milford, CT 06460)



PIEBALD
"ALL AGES AND BARELY LEGAL" CD

A two-CD retrospective. I will refrain from calling this indie rock, but it sure seems that

that's what it is at times. Think latter day CAVE IN, a touch of ICEBURN, and some SPLIT LIP. Rocking. Emo rocking. (STM)
(Big Wheel/www.bigwheelrewc.com)



PINHEAD CIRCUS
"OLD YEAH..." CD EP

Five songs from the guitar gangsters, including three from their original self-titled 7" and a couple of new

ones, including a spirited PRINCE rendition. Speedy, full-throttle melodic hardcore at its best. (RK)
(Not Bad/www.notbadrecords.com)

PIRANHAS

"DICTATING MACHINE SERVICE" 7" EP

This is really incredible, as are their other records. The keyword is damaged, since the Piranhas punish the listener with screams, loud guitars, and the most distorted keyboards you've ever heard. So good its scary. (MC)
(Rock'n'Roll Blitzkrieg/PO Box 11906/Berkeley, CA 94712)

PLUS ONES/TRAVOLTAS

"GOING DUTCH" CD EP

Three largely unreleased tracks each, none of which provide any surprises. For the uninitiated, the PLUS ONES sound like "Alcatraz"-era de-punked MR T EXPERIENCE pop with a 60's feel, whereas the TRAVOLTAS are a sublime fusion of the RAMONES and the BEACH BOYS. Pure fucking genius. (RK)
(Coldfront/Asian Man - two fine labels)

PSYCHO 13

"I BURY THE LIVING" 7" EP

This isn't nearly as cool as the artwork and style of the 7" would make you think. There's some potential here, but on this the band is too sludgy and hence don't really go anywhere. (JC)
(Murder and Mayhem/1500 Mirium Street/Garner, NC 27529)



PSYCHOTIC REACTION
"LAST TRAIN TO NOWHERE" CD

Another really good streetpunk band with a lot of catchy songs and lyrics. Some of the

tracks aren't really that fast-paced, but in general they have a strong tempo and do a find job. These kids really rip it up on the eighteen songs on this disc. (CLL)

(Psycho Bubblegum/PO Box 321/West Haven, CT 06516)

PSYCHOTIC REACTION

"RED ALERT" 7"

This 7" features four anti-war protest songs. I reviewed and listened to it exactly one week after the terrorist attacks in New York and this release might make you about what's going on now, even though they're singing about war with Russia. They also cover the U.K. SUBS' "Warhead". Good political punk, if that's your bag. (CLL)
(www.psychoticreaction.net)

REAL MCKENZIES

"LOCH'D AND LOADED" CD

Definitely title of the year, and fortunately there's music to match. Take away the kilts, bagpipes, and amped-up, punked-out versions of Scottish traditional songs, and you're left with one of the finest bands in North America today. What a work of genius. (RK)
(Honest Don's/www.honestdons.com)

REDSHIFT

"SHADOWLESS CITIZEN" CD

Fast. Moshy. Catchy. Driving hardcore

REVIEWS



with some good breakdowns. Comparable to early V.O.D. crossed with MADBALL with just a dash of GOOD RIDDANCE. (STM)

(Soulforce/soulforcerecords@soulfrocerrecords.com)

REJECTERS

"PIG IRON" CD

If you mixed Dickie from the MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES, a couple of members of the MISFITS, and added a big confederate flag...voilà. In the photo, these tubby cowboys all sport the stars and bars on their t-shirts and hold America's favorite beer in their hands. Not really my thing. (LD)
(LEM/PO Box 3052/Summerville, SC 29484)



REVILLOS

"REV UP" CD

The REVILLOS were a Scottish band that succeeded the '78-era REZILLOS, and featured the same two

flashy lead vocalists, Eugene Reynolds and the babelicious Fay Fife. The name change reflected the group's shift from a bouncy poppy punk attack to a more 60's-influenced but no less bouncy pop sound, go-going girl back-up vocalists and all. This release includes the band's early singles and first album, and is marked by a heavy girl group vibe and loads of camp. (JB)

(Captain Oi/PO Box 501/High Wycombe, Bucks HP10 8QA/ENGLAND)



REVOLVERS

"ROCK'N'ROLL BABYLON" 7" EP

The sound and production are through the roof on this slab. They are

definitely going for a HOLLYWOOD BRATS and NEW YORK DOLLS thing

SHITLIST

here. There's a decent cover of "Then He Kissed Me", which the BRATS also did (much better, I might add). This ain't bad at all, so check it out. (MC) (Radio Blast/PO Box 160308/40566 Düsseldorf/GERMANY)

RIOT 99

"DESTROY THE CITY/START A RIOT" 7" EP
Upbeat British-style streetpunk that's pretty good. It's a shame that this only has two songs on it, since they put some of the bollocks back in Canadian punk. (CLL)
(Taras O./PO Box 462/31 Adelaide Street E/Toronto, Ontario M5C 2J5/CANADA)



ROCK GARDEN

"SUPERSTUFF" 7" EP
ROCK GARDEN must have ruled Arkansas during the late 60s. This EP features some truly great garage rock, including two previously unreleased tunes. The sound varies from tune to

tune, starting off with stomping garage and ending with folk rock. The monster title cut alone makes this worth checking out. (MC)
(Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

ROUNDAABOUT

"HINDSIGHT IS 20/20" CD EP
Five tracks of subpar outtakes from SCREECHING WEASEL's "My Brain Hurts". Not terrible, but nothing to write home about. Another abrasive pop-punk band singing about girls, drinking Bud, and ogling old issues of Playboy. (RK)
(AVD/www.avdrecords.com)

17 STITCHES

"CLOSER THAN YOU THINK" CD
These young blokes fucking shred! They're cross between the ANGELIC

UPSTARTS and AGNOSTIC FRONT, and have a mean hardcore punk edge to their music. This CD only contains seven songs and leaves you wanting more. Definitely keep an eye out for 17 STITCHES, you "punk r-r-rockers"! (CLL)
(Skipworth/PO Box 19388/London W4 1GA/ENGLAND)

LES SEXAREENOS

"OUT TO SEA" 7" EP
This very cool record features a dense, echoey production job that makes it sound nice and vintage. Musically, it's organ- and harmonica driven garage rock. LES SEXAREENOS sound like they would be a real blast live. (JC)
(Sympathy For The Record Industry/www.sympathyrecords.com)

SHADOW REICHENSTEIN

"CEMETERY SURFIN" CD
This is a self-released CDR that is really well done, even though they seem to be on a shoestring budget. SHADOW REICHENSTEIN are a very stylized band with a great sound which is pure spooky fun and who take more than a nod from classic Halloween lovin' bands like the DAMNED and the CRAMPS. Heavy on the surf guitar and exaggerated vocals. (JC)
(www.shadowreichenstein.com)

SHAKES

S/T CD EP (CD-R)
This little EP starts off with a BRITNEY SPEARS cover. It was only a matter of time, folks. After that bad start, things pick up with remaining two songs, including a decent pop-punk/power-pop cut that sounds very similar to the PLUS ONES. Not exactly my cup of tea. (MC)
(The Shakes/1350 Edgecliff Drive #11/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

SHEEK THE SHAYK

"JUST A CHICK" 7" EP
A very cool record. The singer sounds like a combination of Lemmy and Johnny Thunders on side 1, then sounds totally 60's out on side 2. The music is

pure trashed-out rock'n'roll, and the guitars squeeze out some amazing tones throughout. (JC)
(Havacone/1901 Turk Street #11/San Francisco, CA 94115)

SHRINKS

"NOWHERE TO LIVE" 7" EP
Hot damn! Now this is a record that I can really sink my teeth into. The SHRINKS are awesome. Four tracks of amped-up punk rock. Highly recommended. (JC)
(Rapid Pulse/PO Box 5075/Milford, CT 06460)

SIDE WALK SLAM

"TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK" CD
Y'know, I was going to say some OK things about this record, which features some pretty good melodic, poppy songs about girls. OK, it goes on a bit (there's no need to put every song you have on your first record – how about a little quality control?) but, y'know, for a first record, they're doing alright. Then I saw they thanked God, so their only chance lies in the hereafter. (RK)
(no label or address listed)

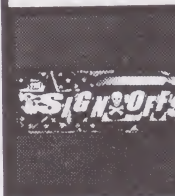


SICK THINGS

"COMMITTED TO SUICIDE" 7"
The SICK THINGS play trashed-out punk, and being a 2-track recording from 1981 it's even noisier and trashier than usual. That's a great thing. These two punk tunes that will kick your teeth in, and it's limited. (BAM)
(Death Valley/GPO Box 3222/GG Melbourne 3001/AUSTRALIA)

SIGN OFFS

"HEARD IT ALL BEFORE/DOG IN A CAGE" 7"
Decent punk'n'roll with a '77 feel. They seem to be going for a beach punk sound like SMOGTOWN, but they still leave me unimpressed. My only real



complaint is that the tunes are just too long – the two songs last nearly 9 minutes. (MC)

(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C013/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)



69 A-GO-GO

"NEW FLAVA/FAG HAG" 7"

Punk'n'roll with really thick production à la AMERICAN

HEARTBREAK. They

take that basic, catchy approach, but then add horns and a synth to it. It's decent, but there's no real flava. (MC) (With an X/ www.withanx.com)



SKIDS

"DAYS IN EUROPA" CD

The SKIDS were an anomalous Scottish quasi-punk band with a unique sound. They featured superheavy

rhythmic drums, roaring guitar work, massive hooks, anthemic choruses, leftish lyrics, and (on this LP cover) fascistic imagery. This 1979 album reflected a subtle shift away from their earlier punk-based material toward a more "Gothic" sound featuring synthesizers (and trendy threads) along with Stuart Adamson's distinctive guitar riffing. It may not be to the liking of EXPLOITED fans, but I personally love songs like "Animation", "Charade", "Working for the Yankee Dollar", "The Olympian", "Thanatos", and (bonus cuts) "Masquerade" and "Out of Town". (JB)

(Captain Oi/www.captainoi.com)

SKULLS/BETTER DEAD THAN RED

"NATIONS OF PRIDE" CD

The SKULLS, presumably not the old L.A. punk band, play some mean skinhead music. The vocals have a real warrior sound to them, and given what they're singing about, I have a strong feeling that they're Brazilian skinheads. BETTER DEAD THAN RED play the same type of slower skinhead music, but the vocals are a bit more melodic and not as deep. Both get a bit boring after a while. (CLL)

(Pro Am/PO Box 304/Centerville, UT 84014)

C.J. SLEEZ

"ROCK ACTION" CD

Even more punk'n'roll. C.J. Slez is the frontwoman of this combo, and the band manages to produce a decent JOHNNY THUNDERS-inspired record.

Fans of TEXAS TERRI might wanna check her out. Also, there's a pair of miniature dice in the jewel case. (MC) (Other Peoples Music/Box 227 Sta. P/Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S7/CANADA)

SLASH CITY DAGGERS

"BACKSTABBER BLUES" CD

The DAGGERS continue to evolve; hence the SLASH CITY addition to their moniker. This time around they're reaching for the stars, and those stars happen to be the NEW YORK DOLLS. One thing that's really well done here is the separation of the guitars in the mix, courtesy of producer JEFF DAHL, who understands what made the DOLLS sound like the DOLLS. Expect a lot of swagger, hard-edged blues licks, and my favorite "oooh" and "ahhhh" falsetto back-up vocals. (X) (Unity Squad/PO Box 1235/Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

SLIVER TONGUED DEVIL/CRIME

KAISERS

SPLIT 7" EP

Sliver Tongued Devil (or "S.T.D.", as I like to call them) check in with two speedy punkers that sound kinda like MOTÖRHEAD, but the vocals don't do it for me. The CRIME KAISERS get things rolling nicely with two fast tunes, lots of punch, and cool melodies, so they take the prize here. (MC)

(Stereodrive/Von-Steuben-Strasse 17/48143 Münster/GERMANY)



SMOGTOWN

"DOMESTIC-VIOLENCELAND" CD

Punk rock with absolutely nothing new about it. Rocking, for sure, but so contrived.

REVIEWS

Good riffs. Think of a more polished SWINGIN' UTTERS. Too Hollywood for my tastes. (STM)

(Disaster/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA. 91510)

SPECIAL DUTIES/VIOLENT SOCIETY

SPLIT 7"

The legendary SPECIAL DUTIES are back with all the original members, and they are still stuck in 1977. They offer two songs of slower, mid-tempo '77-style punk, including the ADVERTS' classic "Gary Gilmore's Eyes". VIOLENT SOCIETY do three songs of angry punk that's full of angst and aggression, and also cover SPECIAL DUTIES' own "Violent Society", which is most appropriate. (CLL)

(Soap And Spikes/PO Box 85021/561 Brant Street/Burlington, Ontario L7R 4K3/CANADA)

STARVATIONS

"CHURCH OF THE DOUBLECROSS" 7" EP

This is a cool-looking record, but it's not very interesting musically. The singer is really trying to sing with gusto, but he can't quite pull it off. The band is jangly and plodding, and doesn't capture my attention much. (JC)

(Perfect 36/no address listed)

STEEL TOE SOLUTION

"S/T" 7"

S.T.S. are cool. Their lyrics are pretty funny, and they talk a lot of shit. Their song "Wrong Side Of The Pond" really stands out as brilliant – it's a silly but true track about Americans that go around speaking and acting like they are from England. This, I'm sure, will piss off some folks, but I myself find humor in it. (CLL)

(Headache/PO Box 204/Midland Park, NJ 07432)

STEVIE & THE SECRETS

"GIMME A CALL/AMERICAN WAY" 7"

Crazy Stevie from the DEVIL DOGS is back with a new outfit that also

SHITLIST



features a member of the CANDY SNATCHERS. The tunes here are very much like those found in Stevie's other post-DOGS outfits the VIKINGS and PEARL SCHWARTZ. Very decent, but don't expect greatness. (MC) (With An X/66 Hope Street/Brooklyn, NY 11211)



STILETTO BOYS "A COMPANY OF WOLVES" CD

These folks have made a name for themselves by injecting some serious pop chops into

the whole '77 thing, which makes for a nice change of pace. I think that this disc, which features cool JAM and BUZZCOCKS covers, would appeal more to fans of pop punk than the '77 crowd. (MC) (Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C103/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)



STILL LEFT STANDING "OUTLOOK NOT GOOD" CD

S.L.S. have that modern HC sound down. Gruff yet melodic (and oh so

heartfelt) vocals, as patented by HOT WATER MUSIC; lots of tempo and riff changes; a thick production, and guts galore. This actually skips along quite nicely. (RK) (Seven Lucky/PO Box 9546/Denver, CO 80209)

S.T.F.U.

"QUIT YER BITCHING" CD

This is nothing more than spasmodic freak out, fast as hell chaos. S.T.F.U.'s music is in the same vein as that of early RAW POWER and CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER. This band is making a name here in the Bay Area with their

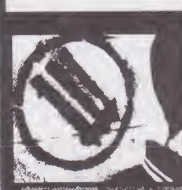
ugliness and chaotic style of punk. (Hard World/1558 Howard Street/San Francisco, CA 94103)



STOOL SAMPLE "PUNK ROCK MERCY KILLING" 7"

This is some kick ass hateful shit. STOOL SAMPLE are fast and pissed, and if you don't

like it then "Take A Shit" and "Kill Yourself" or you'll get pelted with a stool sample in your face. (CLL) (Defecation Nation/4290 Bells Ferry Road #106-82/Kennesaw, GA 30144)



STRIKE ANYWHERE "CHANGE IS SOUND" CD

This is definitely on the Fat Wreck side of hardcore, yet it might be the best version of it that I've heard since

"Operation Phoenix" by GOOD RIDDANCE. The hook-laden HC anthems shine with social and political commentary, but the songs deal with more tangible matters than your usual "political" band. This disc is fast and furious, and features Thomas from the almighty INQUISITION on vocals. (BAM) (Jade Tree/2310 Kennwynn Rd/Wilmington, DE 19810)

STRIKING DISTANCE "MARCH TO YOUR GRAVE" CD

Great old-school HC with plenty of heavy mosh parts thrown in. The vocals are almost Oi-style, like those of the OPPRESSED. Well worth checking out. (BAM) (Thorp/PO Box 2007/Upper Darby, PA 19082)

STUPOR STARS "POISON ARROWS" 7" EP

L.A. punk rock with a lot of bounce. The title track is pretty poppy and kind of limp in comparison to the two really rockin' tunes on the flip. The STUPOR STARS include the great vocalist of the defunct STALLIONS. (MC) (Pelado/521 W. Wilson #C013/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

STYRIAN BOOTBOYS "BOTTLED WITH PRIDE" CD

Half of this Austrian band's CD is sung in German, and the other half contains English lyrics. Musically they cover a lot of styles, including really fast punk, upbeat ska, and lots of mid-tempo Oi. A couple of songs have a TOY DOLLS or COCK SPARRER feel to them, and it's all mostly good. (CLL) (DSS/PO Box 739/4021 Linz/AUSTRIA)



TEENAGE REHAB "PLUNK ROCK" CD

Straightforward punk rock that sometimes veers toward pop. The REHABS are clearly influenced by the

QUEERS and SCREECHING WEASEL, but I'm kinda confused about how they can be into God (who they thank, along with Jesus Christ) but still talk so much about "bitches" and beer. (MC) (Amp/no address listed)

TEENAGE REJECTS "DON'T CARE ABOUT ANYTHING" 7" EP

More snot-nosed Wisconsin teens on Rip Off Records. This release features three tunes that fly by pretty quickly, since the band adopts a simple, straight-to-the-point attack and fills the tunes with attitude. This pretty much blows away most of the stuff that's around these days, but I heard that they've already broken up. (MC) (Rip Off/www.ripoffrecords.org)



THE THIRD DEGREE "CONCRETE WARRIOR" CD

Super fast punk/hardcore with lots of yelling and tough songs. It's not all

jocked-out though, which is good. If you dig a little bit of hardcore with your punk, give it a go. (MC) (Livewire/PO Box 239/Seal Beach, CA 90740)

TINA & THE TOTAL BABES
CD

Due to the TRASHWOMEN and BOBBYTEENS, we all thought we knew what TINA LUCCHESI was capable of. This TOTAL BABES CD floored me with its infectious bubble-gum popping rocks and rolls at every turn, since they reminded me of the era of the KNACK and the BEAT. The only thing missing are the handclaps, so hear my applause. (X)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry/www.sympathyrecords.com)

32FORTY

"Hearts And Mirrors" CD

You can tell that something's not quite right when the promo sheet that accompanies the record suggests which tracks one should play on the radio. Who knows, maybe these guys will make it. Songs about girls, done in the "emo" style popularised by SAMIAM, the GET-UP KIDS, etc. It's pretty well done, though utterly derivative. (RK)
(Lotus/13414 SW 111th Terrace/Miami, FL 33186)

THREE YEARS DOWN



THREE YEARS DOWN

"SNEAKIN' IN" B/W
"LIVE WIRE" 7"

Rock, pure and simple. No, wait...it's RAWK that's full of energy and has a great guitar sound and plenty of 'tude. If you're the type of tattooed son of a bitch who digs AC FUCKING DC, this will be the answer to your prayers. (MC)
(702/www.702records.com)

THREE YEARS DOWN

"SNAKES BITE" LP

If you like to pump your fist in the air and be blown away by a cranked up Marshall, then this is for you. This rocks from beginning to end, and all filler, excess, and bullshit are completely cut out. Good tunes, loud guitars, all rock. It's really that simple. (MC)
(702/PO Box 204/ Reno, NV 89504)

THROW RAG

"BAG OF GLUE/DEVIL GONE GOOD" 7"

Two tracks of roaring country-influenced punk rock. A cool band with an offensive cover that compliments the awesome packaging. Worth picking up. (JC)
(Kapow/PO Box 1287/Lake Forest, CA 92630)

TILES

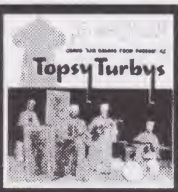
"I CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT/I LET HER BE" 7"

Garage beat from Saarbrücken, Germany, circa 1966. This is the first record release on Mike and Anja Stax's Ugly Things label, and given the predictably excellent results I certainly hope it's not the last. The TILES' A-side is not the standard blues cover song I expected, but rather a terrific original with a nice repetitive guitar part, a primitive beat, and cool minor-key vocal melodies. The flip is a bit more herky-jerky, structurally-speaking, but it also has that garagey quality that I love. (JB)
(Ugly Things/3707 Fifth Avenue #145/San Diego, CA 92103)

TOKYO KNIVES

"I KEEP THINKIN 'BOUT YOU" 7" EP

With members of HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE and the BLACKS, how could this band be anything other than fantastic? The four tunes here pack a huge punch, and the TOKYO KNIVES don't rely too much on their previous efforts in other bands. This is just a great punk rock record. (MC)
(Wrench/BCM Box 4049/London WC1N 3XX/ENGLAND)



TOPSY TURBYS

"HEY TIGER" 7" EP

The TOPSY TURBYS were a cool 60s garage band from Arizona, and this EP contains four tunes, all of 'em pretty good. "Snake Woman" has some unique snake-charmer guitar and vocals. Nothing essential, but fans of 60's garage and Bacchus' great Arizona garage series should keep an eye out for this. (MC)

REVIEWS

(Bacchus Archives/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

TRAVIS CUT

"SHAMBLES" CD

Twelve tracks of perky, upbeat pop punk. Britpop with bollocks, perhaps. Comparisons to J-CHURCH are, I suppose, inevitable, but pretty close to the mark. Cross that with a less guitar heavy SNUFF, and you're almost there. Worth tracking down. (RK)
(Them's Good/www.punkuk.com)



TRICKY WOO

"SOMETIMES I CRY" CD

"Sometimes I Cry" features a lot of straightforward 70's-flavored rawk with a "Kick Out the Jams" attitude. It's a little too jammy for me, but all you rawkers out there are probably already heavily into this album. If you've got a beard, you'll probably love this. (MC).
(Sonic Union, no address listed)

TSAR

"KING OF THE SCHOOL" CD EP

If you're a fan of TSAR, you'll need to hunt for this collection of B-sides and demos. We were told it was a radio only demo meant for the UK airwaves, and contains seven tracks, including a "Silver Shifter" remix and the infamous BACKSTREET BOYS cover, "Larger than Life." TSAR play forever shiny pop. (X)
(Hollywood Records/500 S. Buena Vista Street/Burbank, CA 91521)



2c WORTH

"LIVE, SICK AND RAW" CD

At least once in every issue, I get a CD that just plain sucks. This is the one. The band is competent and apparently they can draw a crowd, but they're much too generic. I think the singer is the biggest

SHITLIST

problem, since his lyrics are sappy and cliched and his delivery is weedy and lacking in any sort of power or range. (JC)

(AVD/8370 West Cheyenne/PMB 109-22/Las Vegas, NV 89129)



TYRADES

"DETONATION" 7" EP

Another awesome single. This is apparently a side project of the

BASEBALL FURIES, who I totally dig, but it's a bit different from the FURIES; it's more fucked up and features lots of noise and cool female vocals. Three originals and a DICKS cover. (MC)
(Big Neck/PO Box 8144/Reston, VA 20195)



UNIT BREED

"I CAN'T SLEEP AND I'M NEVER AWAKE" CD

Coming from some of the same minds which brought forth EMO SUMMER, I

approached this cautiously but was pleasantly surprised. Enjoyable dirge-rock, discordant in all kinds of interesting places and packaged up fancy-like with artwork which gives you a Mike Kelly/Salvador Dali feel. Think SLINT + GEEZER LAKE, with a pinch of IDIOT FLESH, and check out other Unit Breed tunes not on this album at: http://artists.mp3s.com/artists/204/unit_breed.html. (LG)
(Nothing Enterprises/
www.nothingenterprises.com.)

THE UNSEEN

"THE ANGER AND THE TRUTH" CD

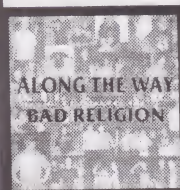
This is a real solid release from this Boston band. They have come a long way, and this CD proves it. It features honest lyrics about what's really going on, both in the world and in the scene, and musically it's fast and angry

punk rock. (CLL)
(BYO/PO Box 67609/Los Angeles, CA 90067)

UPRIGHT CITIZENS

"MAKE THE FUTURE MINE AND YOURS" LP

A much-appreciated reissue of their classic 1983 album. Great fast tempo political punk with real bite, lyrically and musically. Comparable to ONE WAY SYSTEM or the SUBHUMANS at their very best. (JC)
(Ox/PO Box 102225/42766 Haan/GERMANY)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"ALONG THE WAY: A TRIBUTE TO BAD RELIGION" CD

Half the problem with a band as excellent as BAD RELIGION is doing

the songs justice, especially if your guitarist(s) and vocalist(s) aren't up to much. This is a mixed bag. Certain bands LOS VILLAINS, CENTREFOLDS, SLUMPDUSTER, JEFFRIES FAN CLUB - pull it off admirably, often adding a new flourish or two; others fail horribly, most noticeably the LINE. (RK)
(Tru-One/8531 Wellsford Place, Unit H-1/Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"ANTI-CORPORATE DEGENERATE NOISE" CD

This is a really good underground DIY punk compilation put out by *Eat Shit* magazine out of South Lake Tahoe. Most of the bands play uptempo, angry punk whereas some are a bit annoying, but all in all it's a good effort from bands like the ABORTED, DAMAGED GOODS, JUSTIFIED ANGER, OPPRESSED LOGIC, the LOCOS, LITMUS GREEN, the VOIDS, LEAGUE OF STRUGGLE, SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM, and seven others. (CLL)
(Eat Shit/PO Box 4766/South Lake Tahoe, CA 96157)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"BOOT TO HEAD RECORDS SAMPLER" CD

A varied mix of bands from the Boots To



Head roster, including THE WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM, CEASE FIRE, and NEVER THE LESS. You know how these things go: some

tracks rule and some suck. There is mucho diversity, though, more than one might expect. (STM)
(Boot To Head/www.boottohead.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"BOSS SAMPLERAGE! 2" CD

A Boss Tuneage sampler. They have the Brit pop punk/melodic HC market covered, and license a bunch of other good shit too. If you've never heard of the likes of ANNALISE, CHINO, HATE FUCK TRIO, UNKNOWN, KICK JONESES, WORDBUG, SERPICO, NILS, ASEXUALS, PAVERS, PERFECT DAZE and legions more, you ought to. Very good. (RK)
(Boss Tuneage/
www.bosst.freemove.co.uk)

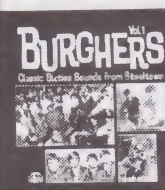


VARIOUS ARTISTS

"A BREED APART" CD

A down and dirty streetwise compilation of hardcore and Oi. Awesome tracks by EVERYBODY GETS

HURT, 100 DEMONS, CLENCHED FIST, and EMPIRE FALLS. Some of the songs are boring, and THROUGH IT ALL are just laughable, but it's still a great collection. (STM)
(Hatecore/www.hatecorerecords.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"BURGHERS, VOL. 1" CD

The first in a projected compilation series of obscure Pittsburgh-area garage bands

from the 60s. My favorite offerings are the snotty punk numbers by the SWAMP RATS (whose "No Friend of Mine" has to be ranked as one of the greatest 60's punk blasts of all times) and the TIME STOPPERS, but there's lots of other cool material on here, ranging from garagey stuff by the

(moody) FANTASTIC DEE-JAYS, HIDES, and FENWAYS to surf-style instrumentals by the ARONDIES to Brit-style psych pop by PETER'S PIPERS. It's amazing that the vaults are still so full of unreleased gems. (JB)
(Big Wink, no address listed)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"DON'T BE SCARED: A FEARLESS RECORDS SAMPLER" CD

Eight Fearless bands - three tracks each, so you do the math. Worth it and more for the unreleased DYNAMITE BOY track. There aren't many other unreleased bands, but with the likes of AT THE DRIVE IN, 30FOOTFALL, AQUABATS and GLASSEATER on their roster, Fearless are really cleaning up these days. A quality selection. (RK)
(Fearless/www.fearlessrecords.com)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"DRUNK'S NOT DEAD!" 7"

Four streetpunk bands singing about boozing it up. They include the LOUTS from Raleigh, NC, die STROHSACKE from Berlin with "Alkohol", the mid-tempo BAD PREACHERS from Joisy, and BOOT MILITIA from Belgium, who have a good rock and roll sound. Listen and learn how to handle your drinking! (CLL)
(Murder & Mayhem/1500 Miriam Avenue/Garner, NC, 27529)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"FIGHTING MUSIC" CD

A 3-way split label sampler between Deathwish Inc., Bridge 9, and Thorpe Records which highlights some

of your faves (such as CONVERGE, STRIKING DISTANCE, the almighty [aka AMERICAN NIGHTMARE], & BOY SETS FIRE) and turns you on to some of the new champions of HC (such as BREAKER BREAKER and CARRY ON). Most of the bands are givin' these out free at shows, and the labels are sending them out free with mail orders. (BAM)

(deathwishinc.com; bridge9.com; thorprecords.com)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"FOR THOSE WHO STAND" CD

Fifteen bands, largely from the chug a chug HC end of the spectrum, donate Previously-released tracks to benefit a fairly mainstream gay rights organisation - A.F.I., REFUSED, BOY SETS FIRE, SNAPCASE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD, GOOD RIDDANCE and more tear it up for the homos. (RK)
(Tear It Down/PO Box 230722/Encinitas, CA 92023)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"GIVE 'EM THE BOOT, III" CD

This is the third in a series of promotional Hellcat/Epitaph sampler. The bands on it include the DISTILLERS, the U.S. BOMBS, the DROPKICK MURPHYS, RANCID, AGNOSTIC FRONT, the NERVE AGENTS, F-MINUS, LEFTOVER CRACK, and a bunch of ska- and psychobilly-sounding bands on the entire second half. (CLL)
(www.epitaph.com)

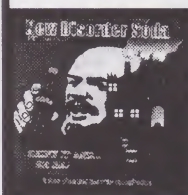


VARIOUS ARTISTS

"KANGAROO" 7"

Another 7" compilation from Kangaroo with a ton of bands from all over the map. This has a ton of frantic hardcore

for one small record. Bands that stand out the most are TEAR IT UP, OUT COLD, YAWP, RAWRIDE and CREEPING JESUS (great name). This also comes with a cool poster insert. Definitely worth checking out. (JC)
(Kangaroo/ Middenweg 13/ 1098 AA Amsterdam/ The Netherlands)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"NEW DISORDER SODA" CD

A lengthy compilation of (I think) all Greater San Francisco Bay Area bands. A wide variety of music can be found herein, but a lot of it consists of noisier, scrappier hardcore stylings. Some of my favorites are the

REVIEWS

BANANAS, TALK IS POISON, the FLESHIES, the SECRETIONS, and the COST. (JC)

(New Disorder/115 Bartlet Street/San Francisco, CA 94110)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"OLD SCARS & UPSTARTS 2001" LP

A double LP of slower rock and roll heroin-sounding glam punk, 28 bands in all. Most of 'em are pretty boring, but there are some good better-known bands like the STITCHES, the CROWD, the DISTILLERS, the WORTHLESS, GADJITS, the U.S. BOMBS, the RICHMOND SLUTS, the PUSHERS, UNION 13, and the VIGILANTES. It's not my thing, but it does come with a cool poster. (CLL)
(Radio Blast/Radioblast@t-online.de)



VARIOUS ARTISTS

"PLEA FOR PEACE/TAKE ACTION" CD

A pretty stellar comp that has something for everyone. Unreleased tracks from the likes of

ALKALINE TRIO, A.F.I., SWINGIN UTTERS, ZERO ZERO, AT THE DRIVE IN, SHAI HULUD, DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN, GRADE, SUICIDE MACHINES, T.S.O.L., SELBY TIGERS, MIKE PARK and nearly twenty more. Undoubtedly more than worth the paltry budget price to hear HOT WATER MUSIC covering MIDNIGHT OIL, as well as a new ATOM & HIS PACKAGE masterpiece. (RK)
(Sub City/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"PUNK LIVE VOL. 2, FIRST BELGIAN PUNK CONTEST MARCH 1978" LP

Mostly unreleased Belgian punk rock from the formative year of 1978. The RAZORS cover "Now I Want To Be Your Dog" which typifies their brand of sluggish, dirty rock. The MODERN WORLD are the clearly the better of the two, since they do songs that are more memorable and have more energy to

SHITLIST

them. All the tracks are live, but the recording quality is OK. An interesting slab of European punk history. (JC)
(Gnome/no address listed)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "PSYCHEDELIC STATES: GEORGIA" CD

The first volume of Georgia bands from Gear Fab's truly fab (but misnamed) new

"Psychedelic States" compilations. Like its three Florida counterparts, it's chock full of terrific 60's garage, punk, pop, and psych offerings, especially the stellar cuts by the SPONTANEOUS GENERATION (red hot psych punk!), the YOUNGER BROTHERS (moody garage), BO ALLEN (punk), the GANG OF SAINTS (moody stuff), the CELTICS (ditto), the APOLLOES (ditto), the FLY-BI-NITES (garage psych), RED BEARD & THE PIRATES (killer fuzz punk), and LITTLE PHIL & THE NIGHT SHADOWS (brilliant mixture). All songs appear to be from the master tapes. (JB)
(Gear Fab, no address listed)



VARIOUS ARTISTS "RESURRECTION A.D. 2001 SAMPLER" CD

A taste of all the R.A.D flavors. This is a solid comp which stretches itself

across the style spectrum from metalcore to melodic punk. The highlights include POWERHOUSE, E-TOWN CONCRETE, and the almighty BAD LUCK 13 RIOT EXTRANVAGANZA. (STM)
(Resurrection A.D./PO Box 763/Red Bank, NJ 07701)



VARIOUS ARTISTS SESSIONS RECORDS SAMPLER, SNOISSES VOL. 1" CD

Sessions is quickly turning into a

premiere skate rock label. If they could just get more of the bands on the label to stay together, they would be a lot better off. The standout bands here are FURY 66, MISSING 23RD, HOPELIFTER, and MOCK. (JC)
(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"SKINS & PINS, VOLUME 2" CD

This is a good sampler of GMM's punk, Oi, and streetrock bands. My favorite songs are by the TROUBLE, the WRETCHED ONES, IRON CROSS, the BOILS, the ANTI-HEROS, PRESSURE POINT, CONDEMNED 84, GLOBAL THREAT, ONE WAY SYSTEM, the MAIN STREET SAINTS, and the BREAKAWAYS. There are 26 bands in all, and most of the rest are on the melodic pop punk side. (CLL)
(GMM/PO BOX 15234/Atlanta, GA 30333)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"SMELLS LIKE BLEACH: A PUNK TRIBUTE TO NIRVANA" CD

In general, I am sick and tired of tribute CDs. The format is totally played out, and at least half of the bands that get them don't deserve them. Having said that, I must admit that I have always liked NIRVANA, and this CD has an intriguing line-up of bands, including the VIBRATORS, the U.K. SUBS, VICE SQUAD, FLIPPER, AGENT ORANGE, D.O.A., and DEE DEE RAMONE. Most of the renditions are pretty straightforward, but most are also pretty good. (JC)
(Cleopatra/PMB 251/13428 Maxella Avenue/Marina Del Rey, CA 90292)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"SOUTH PHILLY STREETFIGHT" 7" EP

Carbon 14's latest "free-with-zine" 7" EP. This time through, they managed to get wrestling songs out of LIMECELL, SERIAL KILLERS, BAD VIBES, and THE COSMIC COMMANDER'S INTERGALACTIC ROCKESTRA. The results are fun, and the between-song comments are great. (MC)
(Carbon 14/PO Box 29247/Philadelphia, PA 19125)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"SUBURBAN VOICE PRESENTS DIY OR DIE" CD

Suburban Voice is one of the best punk mags ever. This is a collection of what Al Quint and company are into. It's mostly on the hardcore side of things, and my favorites on this are LAST I LINE, AUS-ROTTEN, DS-13, SHOOT THE HOSTAGES, and what is probably the best track on here, a great old ART YARD track called "The Law", which made my day. (JC)
(Suburban Voice/PO Box 2746/Lynn, MA 01903)

VARIOUS ARTISTS

"A TRIBUTE TO...COCKSPARRER" CD

You've got to be a fan of the band being eulogized to buy a tribute record. Fortunately, COCK SPARRER wrote so many great, catchy, punk winners that, assuming the bands involved do faithful renditions, it's difficult to mangle them too much. Ironically, the weakest of the fifteen tracks found on this international comp are probably from the biggest name bands - DROPKICK MURPHYS, MAN'S RUIN, and BEERZONE. A workmanlike collection covering a truly inspired group. (RK)
(DSS/www.dssrecords.com)



VEHICLE DEREK "SOMETIMES SHE WILL" CD

When these Brits slow down, they do a very passable melodic hardcore à la the

DOUGHBOYS or later HÜSKER DÜ. When they try and turn up the velocity, they lose the tunes and degenerate into a blank blur. A mixed bag. (RK)
(Boss Tuneage/
www.bosst.freemove.co.uk)



THE VIBRATORS

"LIVE AT THE NASHVILLE '77 & THE 100 CLUB '76" CD

There's no questioning the VIBRATORS' greatness. This disc, however, suffers from pretty poor sound quality. Even so, favorites like "Whips

and Furs" and "Baby Baby" are present, along with some pretty cool STOOGES and ROLLING STONES covers. (MC)
(Overground/PO Box 1NW/Newcastle Upon Tyne NE99 1NW/ENGLAND)

WASTELAND BABIES

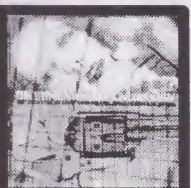
"DEMO" CD

This has three songs of early RANCID-type punk on it, but they're a bit faster than the ex-East Bay heroes. I'd book them a show if I could only figure out where they were from. (CLL)
(Buck Fiddy Hoe/
wasteland~baby@yahoo.com)

WITHIN REACH

"COMPLAINT INGORED" CD

Metal motherfucking madness. Unflinching ferocity. This conquers no new ground, but it's flawless in its assault. The band members have names like Jocke and Magnus. That rules. (STM)
(Bad Taste/www.badtasterecords.com)



WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM

"THE REVOLUTION..."

CD

Noisy without being evil. Intricate without being snooty. Eccentric without being silly. I loved this. Think REFUSED. Think FARENHEIT 454. A remarkable album for those without a "school". (STM)
(Boot To Head/
www.boottohead.com)



WORKIN' STIFFS

"DOG TIRED...AND

THEN SOME" CD

"Dog Tired", the Stiffs' debut full-length, is a damn good record, in the same league as the early material by the SWINGIN' UTTERS. This disc also tacks on a few early singles and comp tracks, so it's a worthwhile purchase for all those who missed their early output. The booklet lists every show these busy folks

played between 1995 and 2001. (MC)
(TKO/4104 24th Street #103/San Francisco, CA 94114)

YIDCORE

"IF I WAS A RICH MAN" CD

This is an Australian band that plays uptempo skate rock with all Hebrew themes. Yes, it is exactly as stupid as it sounds. (JC)
(Swell/PO Box 287004/New York, NY 10128)

YOUNG CANADIANS

"JOYRIDE ON THE WESTERN FRONT" CD

Now here's a great band (who originally called themselves the K-TELS before legal battles made them change their name) that was long overdue for unearthing. One of the first Canadian bands that was worth a shit, they deserve to be ranked up there with the SUBHUMANS, D.O.A, and the POINTED STICKS, although musically they were closer to the more bass-driven, complex bands like the MINUTEMEN and the URINALS. This is an excellent live recording from the famous 1980 "Western Front" festival at the Mab. Highly recommended. (JC)
(White Noize/537 SE Ash Street, Suite 400/ Portland, OR 97214)

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BOOK REVIEWS

Like Hell: A Novel

by Ben Foster (a/k/a Ben Weasel)

(Chicago: Hope and Nonthings, 2001)

"After four years of doing the band it was getting hard to remember why we'd started and why we bothered to keep it going. I guess we kept doing it because hanging out in the rehearsal space working on new tunes for a record or tightening up old ones for a gig was still fun. Just playing never got old, but most of what went on outside that practice room sure did." In my opinion, truer words have never been spoken about the experience of being in a punk rock band. With all the peripheral bullshit that goes on, you had better really LOVE your songs. There's really no other reason to do — or put up with — this shit. It sure gets in your blood, though, and this book right here, even though ostensibly "fictional", does as good a job of taking you through the process as anything you're ever gonna read.

I had no idea what I was gonna be in for when I bought this book. Was it gonna be some weird sci fi novel? Some Bukowski-style insanity? A bunch of political ramblings with a few dick and fart jokes tossed in? What I wound up with was a great story about a guy who LOVES punk rock, and the ups and downs this takes him on as he makes his way. Did you ever notice that EVERYBODY in our scene has an opinion about Ben Weasel? There is very little middle ground — people either like him or hate him — but nobody ignores him. No matter what your personal opinion about the man may be, he sure as hell knows how to rile people up and get them to pay some sort of attention. He is also the king of writing lyrics that appeal perfectly to the "just on the outside" young man. He has his finger right smack dab on the pulse of what it's like to hate the world while romanticizing the hell out of the few good things you find. He also writes melodies to DIE FOR, and backing vocals that will stay in your head for weeks. Over the course of this novel, it turns out he is also one hell of a writer. If you have ever been in a punk rock band, this book will undoubtedly appeal to you, as it has many great anecdotes on the boredom, fun, bullshit, and occasional major excitement that goes on when you try to do something you love with what little you have. If you've never been in a band, this will probably make you never want to. You'll be sitting there

shaking your head, wondering why in the fuck anyone would put up with all that bullshit just to go out and play their stupid songs to people who don't even give a damn, only to spend all your money on equipment upkeep, transportation, recording and all the assorted other crap just to keep digging yourself further and further into a hole. In the end, you realize that getting popular can be the worst thing that ever happened to your band. I don't know the answers to these conundrums myself. I guess it's just worth it somehow.

There's really no standard Ben Weasel "piss you off at all costs" type of stuff going on here. What you get is a great story about a person whose naive ideals and personal integrity nearly kill him, though in the end he comes out the other side to tell about it. While this is certainly a novel in the sense that there are made-up characters and situations that probably didn't happen, I definitely get the feeling that a lot of these situations were just par for the course, and I am glad for the chance to share in some of the insanity. The reader is definitely left wondering how much was real and how much was made up. Who was that character REALLY supposed to be? Is there really this much bullshit involved in just wanting to write great songs, have fun, and travel around? This is a terrific fucking book. I've already read it five times, and will continue to do so. This isn't some fan boy nonsense, either. I disagree with the fucker as often as I agree with him, but there is no doubt that he is a highly intelligent, informed character that certainly has worthwhile things to say in between all the shit-talking. It's nice to be able to read this book and not have to deal with all the "I'm a jaded prick and that's all I am gonna write about" attitude. There is a really honest quality to this book that greatly appeals to me. Honesty is something that's nice to see from time to time.

-Reviewed by Mike Frame

Jobjumper

by Thee Whiskey Rebel (né Phil Irwin)

(Philadelphia: Steel Cage Books, 1999)

334 pages, \$18 postpaid

The chances are that if you're reading this, you hate your fucking job. How many people do you know who actually enjoy doing that which takes up the majority of their time? Even if they DO miraculously

happen to enjoy the work they do, the likelihood is that they HATE lots of their fucking co-workers. It's hard enough to be around people you like for 8 hours a day, much less a bunch of dolts that you would never socialize with for even five seconds in any other situation. But you've gotta pay the rent right? As it says right here on the very first page: There are only two kinds of people in the world, those who have to work and those who don't. If you're the kind of person who doesn't have to work, you won't enjoy this fantastic book half as much as the rest of us poor bastards who have been subjected to — and suffered from — insane bosses, droll-ass co-workers, ridiculous company policies, dress codes, and assorted other hellish working conditions for years just to keep our heads above water. I myself definitely fall into the have-to-work category, so not surprisingly I LOVED this book! I loved it the first time I read it, and I loved it even more the second and third times. There were many situations that I could relate to based on my own experiences, and even more that I was thanking my lucky stars I haven't yet had to deal with — and hopefully never will.

Thee Whiskey Rebel has had one hell of a lot of jobs over the past twenty years or so, and the detail with which he has been able to remember even the most intricate, convoluted circumstances is a source of true amazement. Having gained at least a temporary breather from the work-a-day world, the man fortunately took the time to compile his most interesting experiences from all those years into a great read that you will definitely want to check out. Some of you may remember the Ben Hamper book (*Rivethed*) from a few years back, wherein he chronicled his years working for GM. That was a fantastic book, and there are noticeable similarities between it and *Jobjumper*. The main difference is that Phil Irwin had a shitload more different jobs to draw from instead of only one hellish job that wore him down. Phil regales the reader with story after story about what it was like to be the office weirdo, something many punks should be able to identify with.

Even more interesting are some of the strange (and often insane) co-workers he had to/was able to spend time with over the years. A couple of my faves were Mike Dustin, the Radio Shack co-worker who sold stolen stereo equipment out of his truck in the parking lot and then proceed-

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ed to go to a company party and scare the piss out of the bigwigs in attendance; and Mike Hoeful, the drug-taking, hard-partying lunatic who led the cops on a high speed chase to the worksite just so that he could get the keys and lead his co-workers in to start inventory. These are a couple of the obvious standout characters, but then this whole book is peppered with interesting and annoying people, some of whom I'd have liked to see in action and a whole lot more who I'm glad I never had to come into contact with.

After a fantastic foreword by the great Jim Goad, the reader is treated to tales of working everywhere, from Sears to running a boys' newspaper delivery crew to having his own office with a secretary and making fantastic money for a few years. There's a lot of terrain covered here, but like he says you wouldn't believe how many oddball jobs there are out there that you never even hear about. "How many kids grow up dreaming about one day being the person who turns the ON switch at the dog pound to roast up a couple dozen cute puppies that they can't find homes for? Or the feller who hoses off the floor after an autopsy? Who do they test experimental new models of catheters on?" It almost makes you think that maybe the mundane crap that you have to do and put up with every day isn't really THAT bad, right?

I could go on and on about all the great stories in this book. You should really just buy it and see for yourself, though, since it's extremely well-written, intelligent, funny, and nearly impossible to put down. How many people, other than Bukowski, can you say that about? Phil Irwin had done a superb job of transferring his personality onto the pages of this book, and for that he should be commended. I can't wait to wrap my brain around his next offering, as I'm sure it will be equally wonderful. Who would have thought that one of the best current writers in the world would have come from the punk underground? I seriously cannot recommend this book too highly. The text itself is embellished with some really cool illustrations by Mike Steele, which make for some fine eye candy in amongst the text. I cannot imagine the amount of work that must have gone into independently releasing a 334-page book like this, but I must commend Steel Cage Books for stepping up to the plate. I don't know how many different ways I can say it, but do yourself a favor and BUY THIS BOOK!

-Reviewed by Mike Frame

Dance of Days: Two Decades of Punk in the Nation's Capital

by Mark Andersen and Mark Jenkins
(New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001)

It would be difficult to exaggerate the impact that the Washington D.C. punk scene has had on underground music in the last twenty years. Our nation's capital has given birth to the quintessential DIY record label, countless great bands and, through no real fault of its own, two exorable subgenres of punk. In *Dance of Days*, long-time D.C. scenester/political activist Mark Andersen and arts reporter Mark Jenkins provide a comprehensive and well-researched, albeit slightly dry, history of the D.C. scene.

Dance of Days traces the evolution of the D.C. punk scene from 1976 to 1995. Special attention is paid to the three pivotal moments in the scene's development: the birth of hardcore; Revolution Summer; and the rise of the Riot Grrrl. The book begins with a brief discussion of little-known pre-punk bands like Overkill, the Slickee Boys, and White Boy, whose unwillingness to take the traditional bar band route alienated audiences. From there, Andersen and Jenkins shed some much needed light on the curious circumstances that led Mindpower, a band of four black males from a hardscrabble area on the D.C./Maryland line, to eschew jazz fusion in favor of punk rock. Fueled by the Sex Pistols and a forty-year-old book of self-actualization mumbo jumbo, the men renamed themselves Bad Brains and created a faster, more intense alternative to both the melodic, British-influenced West Coast punk and the opiated skronk of the New York scene. Thus, hardcore punk was born. (NOTE: Some people will try tell you that hardcore originated in the South Bay of Los Angeles. Ignore them. Such an assertion is, of course, ludicrous and a textbook example of Californians' irritating propensity to take credit for every positive cultural development during the last fifty years.) Andersen and Jenkins doggedly pursue the powerful new sound to the hallways of Wilson High School, where it infected a group of D.C. teenagers already wired on caffeine and adrenaline. These kids formed bands like Teen Idles and the Untouchables and began gigging relentlessly in the D.C. area. Since the major labels (and the minor ones too, for that matter) weren't exactly beating down their doors, Teen

Idles members Ian MacKaye and Jeff Nelson formed Dischord Records for the express purpose of documenting the nascent harDCore (get it?) punk scene. Though these early groups soon broke up, the various members quickly formed better bands. Dischord hit its stride with the first Minor Threat EP, which contained the song "Straight Edge" — a musical explanation of MacKaye's personal philosophy of abstinence from alcohol, drugs and promiscuous sex. Soon, kids all over the country were adopting the straight edge philosophy and forming hardcore bands. What they lacked in originality and creativity, these kids made up for in militancy. Rumor has it that certain bands in Boston would knock beers out of people's hands at shows. HarDCore had begotten straight edge — the eager-to-please but hopelessly dull-witted child of punk. Despite the rising popularity that Minor Threat and other harDCore bands were experiencing around the country, all was not well back home, either. The D.C. scene had been infiltrated by mindless thugs. HarDCore had become the soundtrack to wolfpack-style violence.

All was not lost, however. As Andersen and Jenkins make clear, the degeneration of the early 80's harDCore scene led directly to the D.C. punks' next great musical innovation. Disgusted by what had become of their scene, the old guard formed new bands like Rites Of Spring, Beefeater, and Embrace, slowed things down, and began singing (yes, singing) about more personal subject matter. Most of the knuckleheads had little interest in the new sound and stopped going to shows. The few that remained were either chased off or intimidated into behaving themselves. By the summer of 1985, dubbed "Revolution Summer", countless new bands were forming and the D.C. scene was as vital as it had ever been. The bands soon broke up, but this new sound would prove to be so influential that, sixteen years later, it is virtually impossible to tune in to a college radio station without hearing some band of down-in-the-dumps, upper middle class white guys whining about the minutiae of their daily existence. These "emo" bands frequently cite Rites of Spring and Embrace as their main influences, yet lack the power, passion, and talent of either of these forebears.

Dance of Days also provides ample coverage of D.C.'s short, unhappy stint as

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"the next Seattle." In the early nineties, the Riot Grrrl revolution was in full swing and D.C., by virtue of being the temporary home of Bikini Kill, was ground zero. The mainstream media converged upon the city in an effort to document this "new" phenomenon of girls with guitars. Meanwhile, Fugazi, MacKaye's latest band, had drawn the unwanted attentions of the mainstream media, including *Rolling Stone* and *Spin*. Ironically, at a time when the D.C. punk scene was being heralded as a hotbed of musical innovation, it was arguably at artistic low tide. Pioneering bands like Kingface, Ignition, and Government Issue had broken up, leaving a void that, Fugazi aside, was proving difficult to fill. The Riot Grrrl bands, though groundbreaking in many ways, had their feet planted firmly upon well-trod musical ground. The only other new band that was generating much buzz was the Nation of Ulysses, whose heavily-pomaded hair, coordinated outfits, and calculated revolutionary double talk sug-

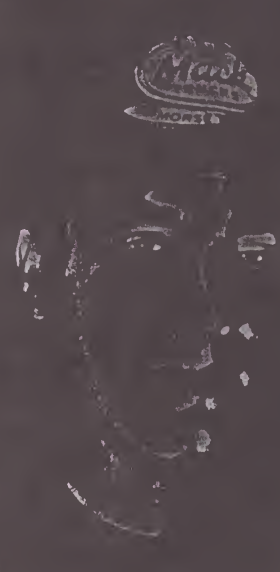
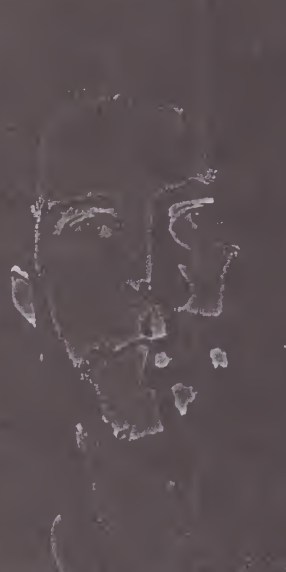
gested a sort of punk rock Backstreet Boys and did little to obscure the fact that they were ripping off Rites of Spring — and doing it poorly. This was of little moment to the media who, as Andersen and Jenkins point out, came in, wreaked havoc, and then left to find the next big thing.

Inevitably, readers will disagree with the amount of coverage afforded certain bands, and charges of Dischord-centrism are sure to arise (especially since Happy Go Licky, a band that lasted about as long as the average junior high school romance and had close ties to Dischord, is given a considerable amount of space, whereas the sublime 9353, a very popular band in the mid-eighties, are labeled a "heroin band" and never spoken of again, even though they reformed amid much fanfare in the nineties.) Such criticism misses the mark, however. First of all, the coverage afforded to the bands seems to be largely a function of longevity. Andersen and Jenkins follow closely the long and frus-

trating career of Bad Brains, who managed to elude success time and time again through a combination of homophobia, mental illness, and bad interpersonal skills. They also write at length about the trials and tribulations of the long-lived Fugazi, who have become a sort of musical Rorschach to which their fans and detractors attach various meanings, expectations and beliefs — most of which are unrealistic, naïve, or utterly ridiculous. Furthermore, *Dance of Days* is a history of a very active music scene. It would be impossible to provide detailed coverage of all or even most of the bands that have played a significant role in the evolution of D.C. punk. Thus, Andersen and Jenkins had no choice but to focus on what they view as the scene's most important bands. For the most part, their choices are beyond reproach; like them or not, the Dischord bands were, by and large, the most popular and influential D.C. punk bands of the last two and a half decades.

Dance of Days is more than simply an

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BOOKREVIEWS

encyclopedia of D.C. punk bands, though. The book details the history and projects of Positive Force D.C., the political activist group that Andersen helped found and which has close ties to the D.C. punk scene. For anyone who has had to endure a pedantic lecture on U.S. foreign policy delivered by a 17-year-old Positive Force member, this may not be a selling point. However, it is interesting to read about the group's involvement in both the well-publicized "Meese is a Pig" poster campaign, and the percussion protests that D.C. punks staged outside of the South African Embassy. And Positive Force detractors will undoubtedly enjoy learning about how the group's over-reliance on Fugazi to play its benefits led to conflict with the band; the staunchly independent MacKaye bristled at the growing perception that Fugazi was simply the musical arm of Positive Force. However, the descriptions of the power struggles within Positive Force are not particularly compelling, especially since the fair-minded Andersen is loathe to go into great detail lest he malign one of the figures involved.

Perhaps the most surprisingly enjoyable aspect of *Dance of Days* are the first person accounts written by Andersen. The book started out as Andersen's history of the D.C. punk scene. It was only recently that he brought Jenkins in to help give it a more objective tone. The authors elected to leave intact, set off from the main text, a series of passages written solely by Andersen describing his reaction to events. (The last chapter also seems to have been written solely by Andersen). At first, these passages seem rather distracting but, over the course of the book, they inject some much-needed passion into the text and offer a very candid glimpse into Andersen's life. A firm believer that "punk" is more than a form of music, Andersen has always expected a great deal of the D.C. punk bands and fans, as well as his peers in Positive Force. During the major label feeding frenzy of the early nineties, his faith was severely tested. Some of Andersen's comrades began signing to major labels and attempting to make a career of music. One of his closest friends even invited MTV, the personification of evil to Andersen, into the Positive Force house. Viewing these changes as signs of the imminent destruction of the scene that he had worked so tirelessly to help create, Andersen underwent a spiritual crisis that forced him to flee D.C. It is

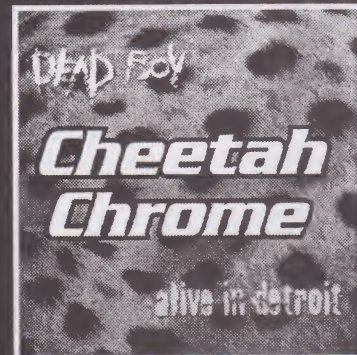
truly heartening to see that, unlike many punk puritans whose black and white worldview forced them to write off the musical careerists as sell-outs or worse, Andersen was ultimately able to come to terms with, and even understand, his friends' choices.

Dance of Days is not without its flaws. The text is dense at times, owing in large part to the authors' desire to cram as much information into the book as possible. (One can almost picture Andersen and Jenkins hunched over a typewriter with a list of hundreds of D.C. punk bands, checking them off one by one as they manage to work a mention into the text.) As a result, it's difficult to imagine someone becoming so engrossed in *Dance of Days* that they read it all in a single sitting. More humor could have added to the book's readability. As it is, the work's few light-hearted moments come courtesy of former Government Issue frontman John Stabb, whose willingness to badmouth others on the record is both remarkable and remarkably entertaining. Another problem is the authors' use of previously published material. Many of the quotes in the book are taken from other sources (in some cases, articles that were written by Jenkins). There is certainly nothing wrong with recycling quotes. However, the average *Dance of Days* reader is likely a D.C. punk fanatic who will have read these quotes in their original form. Thus, he or she may conclude that, while Andersen and Jenkins do an excellent job of synthesizing material that has appeared elsewhere, *Dance of Days* offers little in the way of new information. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that Andersen and Jenkins elected to reprint some photos that had already appeared in *Banned in D.C.*, a fantastic photographic history of the D.C. scene that was published in the late eighties. The photos don't look nearly as good in *Dance of Days* because the book is not printed on glossy paper.

These complaints aside, *Dance of Days* is well-worth reading. Those who are unfamiliar with the D.C. punk scene will learn a great deal from the book and be turned on to dozens of great bands. D.C. punk aficionados, on the other hand, will be reminded of the spirit and sounds that made them fall in love with the scene in the first place. ⊕

-Reviewed by J. Hunter Bennett

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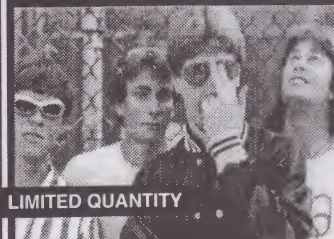
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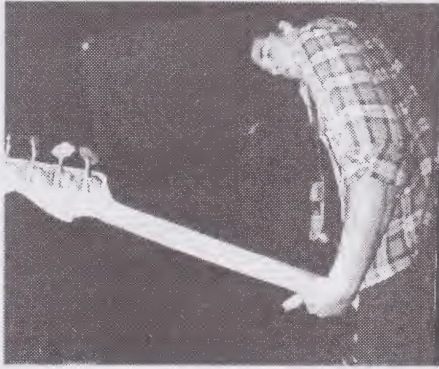
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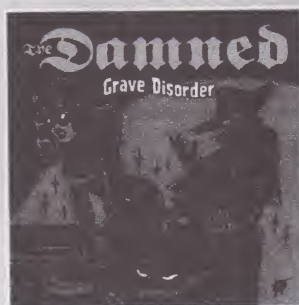
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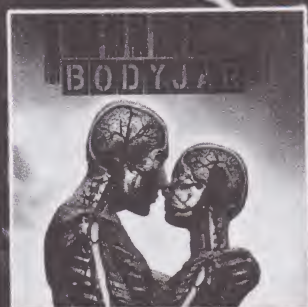
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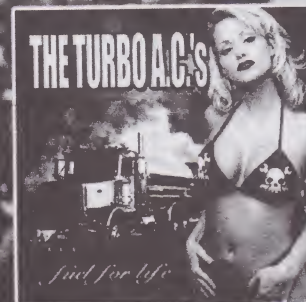
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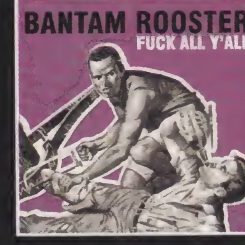
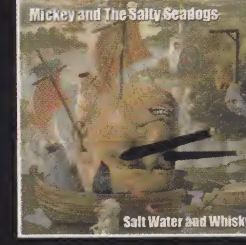
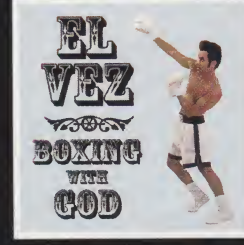
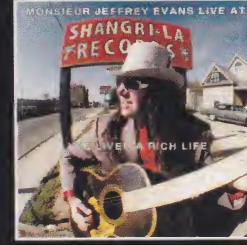
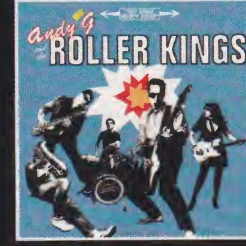
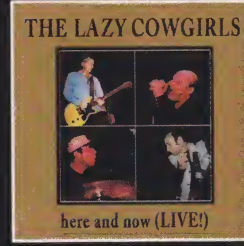
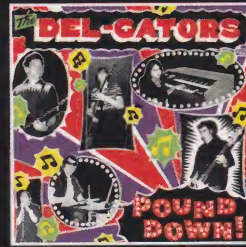
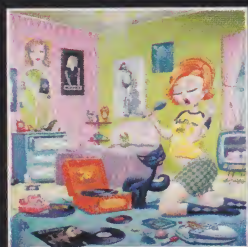
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